

Trump: It looks like Iran hit Saudis, no military option yet

By ROBERT BURNS

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump declared Monday it "looks" like Iran was behind the explosive attack on Saudi Arabian oil facilities. But he stressed that military retaliation was not yet on the table in response to the strike against a key U.S. Mideast ally.

Oil prices soared worldwide amid the damage in Saudi Arabia and fresh Middle East war concerns. But Trump put the brakes on any talk of quick military action — earlier he had said the U.S. was "locked and loaded" — and he said the oil impact would not be significant on the U.S., which is a net energy exporter.

The Saudi government called the attack an "unprecedented act of aggression and sabotage" but stopped short of directly pinning blame on Iran. Iran denied involvement.

Trump, who has repeatedly stressed avoiding new Middle East wars, seemed intent on preserving room to maneuver in a crisis that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had immediately called Iran's fault. Pompeo said Saturday, "Iran has now launched an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply."

Trump, too, had talked more harshly at first. But by Monday afternoon he seemed intent on consultations with allies.

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President Donald Trump speaks before leaving the White House, Monday, Sept. 16, 2019, in Washington.

Associated Press



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Continued from Front

"That was an attack on Saudi Arabia," he said.

"It wasn't an attack on us, but we would certainly help them," he said, noting a decades-long alliance linked to U.S. oil dependence that has lessened in recent years. The U.S. has no treaty obligation to defend Saudi Arabia.

Trump said he was sending Pompeo to Saudi Arabia "to discuss what they feel" about the attack and an appropriate response.

One U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said the U.S. was considering dispatching additional military resources to the Gulf but that no decisions had been made. The U.S. already has the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier battle group in the area, as well as fighter jets, bombers, reconnaissance aircraft and air defenses. Trump, alternating between aggressive and non-violent reactions, said the U.S. could respond "with an attack many, many times larger" but also "I'm not looking at options right now."

American officials released satellite images of the

damage at the heart of the kingdom's crucial Abqaiq oil processing plant and a key oil field, and two U.S. officials said the attackers used multiple cruise missiles and drone aircraft.

Private experts said the satellite images show the attackers had detailed knowledge of which tanks and machinery to hit within the sprawling Saudi oil processing facility at Abqaiq to cripple production. But "satellite imagery can't show you where the attack originated from," said Joe Bermudez, an expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who examined the images.

"What the photos indicate is that someone planned a sophisticated, coordinated attack that really impacted the production of oil at this facility," he said.

The U.S. alleges the pattern of destruction suggested Saturday's attack did not come from neighboring Yemen, as claimed by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels there. A Saudi military alleged "Iranian weapons" had been used.

The Saudis invited United Nations and other international experts to help investigate, suggesting there



In this Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019 file photo, made from a video broadcast on the Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya satellite news channel, smoke from a fire at the Abqaiq oil processing facility fills the skyline, in Buqayq, Saudi Arabia.

Associated Press

was no rush to retaliate.

Jon Alterman, the chief Middle East expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the Saudi caution reflects the kingdom's wariness of taking on Iran.

"I don't think there's a great independent Saudi capability to respond," he said. "You don't want to start a war with Iran that you don't have an idea how you're going to end."

In New York, the new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Kelly Craft, condemned the attack and said that "emerging information indicates that responsibility lies with Iran."

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Mark Esper suggested Iranian involvement, too. In a series of tweets after meeting with Trump and other senior national security officials, Esper said the administration was working with partner nations "to address this unprecedented attack and defend the international rules-based order that is being undermined by Iran." Iran rejected the allegations, and a government spokesman said there now is "absolutely no chance" of a hoped-for meeting between Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Trump at the U.N. General Assembly next week.

"Currently we don't see any sign from the Americans which has honesty in it, and if the current state continues there will be ab-

solutely no chance of a meeting between the two presidents," spokesman Ali Rabiei said.

Downplaying any talk of imminent U.S. military action, Vice President Mike Pence's chief of staff, Marc Short, told reporters at the White House that Trump's "locked and loaded" was "a broad term that talks about the realities that" the U.S. is "safer and more secure domestically from energy independence."

The new violence has led to fears that further action on any side could rapidly escalate a confrontation that's been raging just below the surface in the wider Persian Gulf in recent months.

There already have been mysterious attacks on oil tankers that Washington blames on Tehran, at least one suspected Israeli strike on Shiite forces in Iraq, and the downing of a U.S. military surveillance drone by Iran.

Those tensions have increased ever since Trump pulled the U.S. out of Iran's 2015 agreement with world powers that curtailed Iranian nuclear activities and the U.S. re-imposed sanctions that sent Iran's economy into freefall.

The weekend attack halted production of 5.7 million barrels of crude a day, more than half of Saudi Arabia's global daily exports and more than 5% of the world's daily crude oil production.

The U.S. and international benchmarks for crude each vaulted more than 14%, comparable to the 14.5% spike in oil on Aug. 6, 1990, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. stocks were down but only modestly. Major stock indexes in Europe also fell. Markets in Asia finished mixed.

At a news conference, Saudi military spokesman Col. Turki al-Maliki said, "All the indications and operational evidence, and the weapons that were used in the terrorist attack, whether in Buqayq or Khurais, indicate with initial evidence that these weapons are Iranian weapons."

Russia's Foreign Ministry, while expressing "grave concern" about the attack, warned against putting the blame on Iran, saying that plans of military retaliation against Iran would be unacceptable. □

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Third round of flooding in 2019 likely along Missouri River

By JOSH FUNK
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The amount of water flowing down the lower Missouri River this year is approaching the record set during the historic 2011 flood, and another round of flooding is expected this week after unusually heavy rains upstream, federal officials said.

Heavy rains dumped more than four times what is normal in parts of Montana, North and South Dakota and Nebraska last week — triggering flood warnings and forcing the forecast for how much water will flow down the Missouri River to jump by 4 million acre feet (1.22 million meters) to 58.8 million acre feet (17.92 million meters).

That will be second only to 2011's 61 million acre feet (18.59 million meters), and it means the river has stayed high all year long. Previously, the second highest runoff year was 1997 when 49 million acre feet (14.94 million meters) of water flowed down the river and caused major flooding.

"2019 continues to be a very wet year throughout the basin," said John Remus with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that operates the dams along the Missouri River.

This week's third round of flooding along the Missouri River will likely be less severe than the first two but still significant, said National Weather Service hydrologist Dave Pearson. When the river crests near Omaha, Nebraska, on Friday and Saturday, parts of Interstate 29 and 680 could

again be under water.

At Omaha, this week's crest is projected to be 30.5 feet (9.3 meters). In March the river hit 34 feet (10.36 meters), and it registered 32 feet (9.75 meters) in the June flooding.

The Corps of Engineers doesn't expect major problems or threats to cities with this week's latest flooding — provided all the temporary repairs that have been made to levees since the spring hold up. But communities along the river are bracing for more problems in an exceptionally wet year.

Residents of Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, have been encouraged to evacuate their homes as a precaution because the river is already threatening that city. The river will peak there on Tuesday.

"When people call me and ask me what to do, I tell them, 'Hey I relocated my family,'" Dakota Dunes Community Improvement District Manager Jeff Doolley told the Sioux City Journal. "If you wait until you know for sure, it's too late."

Downstream, residents of Hamburg, Iowa, will be keeping a close eye on the repaired levees around their town that was inundated in the spring to be sure the patches will hold up. Completely repairing the levees damaged in the spring is likely to take several years and cost more than \$1 billion.

"Anybody I talk to I tell them to be prepared," said Mike Crecelius, the emergency manager in the southwest Iowa county that's home to Hamburg. "There's been no



This Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019 photo provided by the South Dakota Civil Air Patrol shows an aerial view of the flooding in Spencer, S.D.

Associated Press

relief at all this year."

In March, massive flooding caused more than \$3 billion in damage in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri. In June, flooding returned

and inundated many of the same places because most damaged levees remained broken.

The river will remain high throughout the fall be-

cause the Corps of Engineers plans to continue releasing large amounts of water into the river to clear out space in the reservoirs ahead of winter. □




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New Kavanaugh allegation unlikely to prompt impeachment

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and LAURIE KELLMAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As several Democratic presidential candidates called for the impeachment of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, newly disclosed allegations are reviving questions about the rush to confirm President Donald Trump's nominee at the height of the #MeToo movement.

The Senate confirmed Kavanaugh last October after emotional, widely watched hearings over an allegation of a sexual assault from his high school years. The vote provided a signature achievement for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, fulfilling a long-held Republican desire to pack the Supreme Court and much of the federal judiciary with conservatives. The New York Times reported over the weekend that Kavanaugh faced a separate allegation from his time at Yale University and that the FBI did not investigate the claim. Still, many Democrats are reluctant to reprise the controversy that likely cost the party Senate seats in the midterm elections.

McConnell opened the Senate on Monday saying the new round of allegations against Kavanaugh "felt a little like Groundhog Day." He called the Times report "yet another poorly sourced, thinly reported unsubstantiated allegation." While impeachment proceedings against Kavanaugh are extremely unlikely, the revelations raise fresh questions about the GOP rush to push Kavanaugh's confirmation.

The latest claim in the Times is similar to one offered during Kavanaugh's confirma-



In this Nov. 30, 2018, file photo Associate Justice Brett Kavanaugh sits with fellow Supreme Court justices for a group portrait at the Supreme Court Building in Washington.

Associated Press

tion process by Deborah Ramirez, a Yale classmate who claimed Kavanaugh exposed himself to her during a drunken party. Kavanaugh declined to comment Monday through the court's press office, but in Senate testimony last year, he flatly denied all allegations of misconduct.

On Monday, The Associated Press learned that one Democratic senator had raised concerns to the FBI as agents were investigating.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., asked the FBI on Oct. 2 to speak with "one individual I would like to specifically refer you to for appropriate follow up," according to a letter obtained by the AP.

The senator's letter does not spell out the allegations, and the person's name is redacted in the letter. But a person familiar with the letter confirmed Coons was referring to Max Stier, a Yale classmate of Kavanaugh's

who is the person cited in the newspaper story.

The senator's letter to the FBI said the person had "information relevant to Ramirez's allegations."

The Times said that the female student in the latest claim declined to be interviewed and that friends said she doesn't recall the episode. The newspaper said Sunday in an editor's note that an earlier version of its story didn't include that information. But several Democratic presidential candidates were quick to call for Kavanaugh's impeachment. Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., said Kavanaugh "lied" to the Senate and "most importantly to the American people." She tweeted: "He must be impeached." Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, tweeted, "Like the man who appointed him, Kavanaugh should be impeached." Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke assert-

ed in a tweet: "We know he lied under oath. He should be impeached."

Their calls were highly unlikely to be taken up by the House Judiciary Committee, where impeachment proceedings would begin. The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., said Monday that his panel is focused on impeaching Trump.

"We have the head of the FBI coming before our committee next month, and we're certainly going to ask him about this, and we're going to see where it goes from there," Nadler said on WNYC's "The Brian Lehrer Show."

Republicans affirmed their support for Kavanaugh. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina tweeted, "As Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I promise you Justice Kavanaugh will not be impeached over these scur-

rilous accusations."

At the forefront of the claims against Kavanaugh last fall were allegations from Christine Blasey Ford, a college professor in California, who testified that Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her when they were teens at a high school party near Washington, D.C.

As voting neared, three key Republican senators whose votes McConnell needed remained undecided, and the GOP leader drew them and other Republicans to his office to decide the next steps.

They resolved to ask the FBI to take an additional week to investigate the claims of Ford and Ramirez.

Days later, Coons sent his letter to the FBI. A copy — with Stier's name redacted — was sent to the Judiciary Committee and its chairman, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa. The letter did not contain any specific details of the allegation.

McConnell would later tell the AP and others that the senators determined the "scope" of the FBI's investigation.

On Monday, Grassley said his office "never received anything from Mr. Stier" or anything with the special allegation against Kavanaugh "like the one referenced."

Grassley stood by the process and scoffed at impeachment, saying, "There weren't any allegations in the letter. They just said you ought to talk to so-and-so." One of those three Republicans whose vote McConnell needed was Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who ultimately voted to confirm Kavanaugh. Her spokeswoman said Monday that the new allegation is an "accusation that lacks an accuser." □

Epstein accusers denied compensation in victims' rights case

By JIM MUSTIAN
Associated Press

A group of women who say they were sexually abused by Jeffrey Epstein suffered a setback Monday in their decade-long legal fight over a plea deal that allowed the financier to avoid a lengthy prison term.

A federal judge in West Palm Beach, Florida, ruled that the women were not entitled to compensation from the U.S. Justice Department, even though prosecutors violated their rights by failing to consult them about the 2008 deal to end a federal probe that could have landed Epstein in prison for life.

"In the end they are not receiving much, if any, of the relief they sought," U.S. District Judge Kenneth Marra wrote.

One of the women's attorneys, Paul Cassell, said they are considering an appeal. "We are disappointed that no remedy will be awarded for the proven violation of the victims' rights that the government caused in this case," he said.

Several of Epstein's victims sued the Justice Department in 2008 over their handling of his plea negotiations, in which his victims were purposely kept in the dark by state and federal prosecutors in South Florida.

They kept the legal case alive for years, even after Epstein finished serving his 13-month jail term, paid financial settlements to victims and registered as a sex offender, arguing that prosecutors had violated the federal Crime Victims' Rights Act.

The drawn-out litigation ultimately fueled a Miami Herald investigation into the plea negotiations, which in turn led to a new wave of public outrage over perceived favorable treatment for Epstein, who once counted Presidents Donald Trump and Bill Clinton as friends.

Federal prosecutors in New York revived the case, arguing they weren't bound by the original deal, and charged Epstein with sex

trafficking.

Former Miami U.S. Attorney Alexander Acosta, who oversaw the plea deal, stepped down as U.S. labor secretary amid the renewed scrutiny.

And Marra ruled in February that prosecutors had violated the rights of dozens of Epstein accusers by secretly reaching a nonprosecution agreement that allowed Epstein to plead guilty to state charges.

Despite those findings, Marra said in his decision Monday, the Crime Victims' Rights Act did not authorize an award of restitution to the women.

He also said they weren't entitled to recover attorney's fees from the government, or have the original plea bargain thrown out,

or to get other things they'd asked for, including records related to the investigation and a personal meeting with Acosta.

But he said they could "take solace" in the national attention their lawsuit brought to "the importance of victims in the criminal justice system."

The civil case "likely played some role," he said, in the federal sex trafficking charges brought against Epstein this summer.

"It has also resulted in the United States Department of Justice acknowledging its shortcomings in dealing with crime victims, and its promise to better train its prosecutors regarding the rights of victims under the CVRA in the future," Marra wrote in the 15-page ruling.



In this Aug. 27, 2019 file photo, Virginia Roberts Giuffre, a sexual assault victim, speaks during a press conference outside a Manhattan court in New York.

Associated Press

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Miami declined to comment.

Epstein killed himself in August in the federal jail in New York where he was

awaiting trial. The U.S. attorney general, William Barr, has vowed to bring to justice anyone who helped Epstein recruit underage women for sex acts. □



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GM walkout brings factories and warehouses to a standstill

By TOM KRISHER and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER

Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — More than 49,000 members of the United Auto Workers went on strike Monday against General Motors, bringing more than 50 factories and parts warehouses to a standstill in the union's first walkout against the No. 1 U.S. automaker in over a decade.

Workers left factories and formed picket lines shortly after midnight in the dispute over a new four-year contract. The union's top negotiator said in a letter to the company that the strike could have been averted had the company made its latest offer sooner.

The letter dated Sunday suggests that the company and union are not as far apart as the rhetoric leading up to the strike had indicated. Negotiations continued Monday in Detroit after breaking off during the weekend.

But union spokesman Brian Rothenberg said the two sides have come to terms on only 2% of the contract. "We've got 98% to go," he said Monday.

Asked about the possibility of federal mediation, President Donald Trump, said it's possible if the company and union want it.

"Hopefully they'll be able to work out the GM strike quickly," Trump said before leaving the White House for New Mexico. "Hopefully, they're going to work it out quickly and solidly."

Wall Street did not like seeing the union picketers. GM shares closed Monday down 4.2 percent to \$37.21. On the picket line Monday at GM's transmission plant in Toledo, Ohio, workers who said they have been with the company for more than 30 years were con-



General Motors employees Bobby Caughel, left, and Flint resident James Crump, shout out as they protest with other GM employees, United Auto Workers members and labor supporters outside of the Flint Assembly Plant on Monday, Sept. 16, 2019 in Flint, Mich.

Associated Press

cerned for younger colleagues who are making less money under GM's two-tier wage scale and have fewer benefits.

Paul Kane, from South Lyon, Michigan, a 42-year GM employee, said much of what the union is fighting for will not affect him.

"It's not right when you're working next to someone, doing the same job and they're making a lot more money," he said. "They should be the making the same as me. They've got families to support."

Kane said GM workers gave up pay raises and made other concessions to keep GM afloat during its 2009 trip through bankruptcy protection.

"Now it's their turn to pay us back," he said. "That was the promise they gave."

UAW Vice President Terry Dittes told GM that the

company's latest offer might have made it possible to reach an agreement if it had come earlier.

"We are disappointed that the company waited until just two hours before the contract expired to make what we regard as its first serious offer," Dittes wrote in the letter to Scott Sandefur, GM's vice president of labor relations.

There are many important items left in the talks, including wage increases, pay for new hires, job security, profit sharing and treatment of temporary workers, Dittes wrote. "We are willing to meet as frequently, and for as long as it takes, to reach an agreement that treats our members fairly," the letter said.

GM issued a statement saying it wants to reach a deal that builds a strong future for workers and the business.

The automaker said Sun-

day that it offered pay raises and \$7 billion worth of U.S. factory investments resulting in 5,400 new positions, a minority of which would be filled by existing employees. GM would not give a precise number. The company also said it offered higher profit sharing, "nationally leading" health benefits and an \$8,000 payment to each worker upon ratification.

Before the talks broke off, GM offered new products to replace work at two of four U.S. factories that it intends to close.

The company pledged to build a new all-electric pickup truck at a factory in Detroit, according to a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity. The person was not authorized to disclose details of the negotiations. The automaker also offered to open an electric vehicle battery plant in Lordstown,

Ohio, where it has a huge factory that has already stopped making cars and will be closed. The new factory would be in addition to a proposal to make electric vehicles for a company called Workhorse, the person said.

It's unclear how many workers the two plants would employ. The closures, especially of the Ohio plant, have become issues in the 2020 presidential campaign. President Donald Trump has consistently criticized the company and demanded that Lordstown be reopened.

Kristin Dzikczek, vice president of labor and industry for the Center for Automotive Research, an industry think tank, said the letter and resumption of contract talks are encouraging signs. "It makes me think that both sides are probably closer than it might have seemed before," she said.

But both Dzikczek and Art Wheaton, an auto industry expert at the Worker Institute at Cornell University, say GM left out key details when it made part of its offer public, and working out those details could make the strike last longer.

"I think GM kind of sabotaged some of the negotiations by going immediately to the public," Wheaton said. "It really distorts the offer."

The strike shut down 33 manufacturing plants in nine states across the U.S., as well as 22 parts-distribution warehouses. It's the first national strike by the union since a two-day walkout in 2007 that had little impact on the company.

Workers at Fiat Chrysler and Ford continued working under contract extensions. Any agreement reached with GM will serve as a template for talks with the other two companies. □

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This July 10, 2017, file photo shows a tower outside of the razor wire at the Great Plains Correctional Facility in Hinton, Okla.

Associated Press

Oklahoma prison violence appears gang- related, coordinated

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Weekend fights at six Oklahoma prisons that left one inmate dead and more than a dozen others injured were apparently coordinated and the result of race-based gang tension inside the facilities, the head of a prison workers association said Monday. The first fight erupted Saturday at the Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center in Vinita, in the northeast of the state. It was followed Sunday by fights at prisons in Hominy, Sayre, Fort Supply, Lawton and Stringtown, according to the state Department of Corrections. The prisoner who died was at the medium-security Dick Conner Correctional Center in Hominy, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) northeast of Oklahoma City. More than a dozen inmates with injuries that aren't considered life-threatening.

"It has to be a coordinated effort," said Bobby Cleveland, director of the Oklahoma Corrections Professionals. "They even had fights at the minimum-security prison," he said, referring to the Fort Supply lockup.

All of Oklahoma's prisons remained locked down on Monday, with family visitation canceled and inmates mostly confined to their cells. Prison officials were still investigating what caused the fights, but Cleveland said tension has been brewing for months among race-based gangs inside the state's prisons.

Eighteen members of a white supremacist Oklahoma prison gang were charged earlier this year with racketeering, drug conspiracy and kidnapping that resulted in at least six homicides over the past 14 years, according to a federal indictment. □

Propane blast kills firefighter, injures his brother, others

FARMINGTON, Maine (AP)

— A fierce propane explosion leveled a newly constructed building after fire crews arrived to investigate the smell of gas Monday, killing one firefighter and injuring at least eight other people, including fellow firefighters, officials said.

The blast was so powerful it blew a vehicle across an intersection and damaged nearby buildings. Paper, insulation and building debris rained on the area.

The explosion shattered the two-story building that housed LEAP Inc., a non-profit that serves people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, just a couple of months after it was finished.

"It's a war zone. It's just a mess," said Scott Landry, a member of the Farmington Town Select Board. "The building is gone."

The blast killed 68-year-old Fire Capt. Michael Bell and injured his brother, Fire Chief Terry Bell; five other firefighters; a maintenance worker for LEAP; and an ambulance worker, officials said.

Four of the firefighters were in the intensive care unit at Maine Medical Center in Portland, while the maintenance worker was being treated at a hospital in Boston, officials said. One firefighter and the ambulance worker were treated and released.

The blast hit around 8:30 a.m. in this town in western Maine, about 70 miles north of Portland.



An aerial view of the devastation after an explosion at the Life Enrichment Advancing People (LEAP) building, in Farmington, Maine killed one firefighter and injured multiple other people, on Monday morning September 16, 2019.

Associated Press

Neighbors heard a thunderous boom that rattled homes and knocked pictures off walls. Flying paper and dust made it look as if a snowstorm had hit.

LEAP worker Lisa Charles, who lives down the street from the explosion site, was home with her kids when the blast startled the family. She stepped outside to see debris falling from the sky and feared the worst for her colleagues.

"I know everybody in there. I thought for sure everybody was gone," she said. "They got a warning from the maintenance guy who was a hero for telling them to evacuate."

Kim Hilton, who works in the admissions department at the nearby University of Maine at Farmington, said she was frightened when her building shook.

"It felt like someone hit our building with a vehicle," she said.

Gov. Janet Mills — who is from Farmington and whose office said she knew the firefighter who died — ordered flags lowered to half-staff across the state. Mills also visited the scene and promised the state fire marshal's office will investigate.

"We're going to get to the bottom of as much as we possibly can to protect this community, to protect all other communities and make sure this doesn't happen again," she told reporters.

The 40-by-60-foot (12-by-18-meter) building, which served as the administrative offices for LEAP, opened eight to 10 weeks ago and wasn't yet fully staffed, Landry said.

The smell of gas was detected when the first workers arrived and the building evacuated before most workers had arrived for the day, he said. □

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Noise but no breakthrough as Johnson, Juncker talk Brexit

By **LORNE COOK**
JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LUXEMBOURG (AP) — Boris Johnson was booed by protesters and berated by Luxembourg's leader on a visit to the tiny nation Monday for his first face-to-face talks with the European Union chief about securing an elusive Brexit deal.

On a day of commotion and conflicting signals, Johnson pulled out of a news conference because of noisy anti-Brexit demonstrators, leaving Luxembourg's prime minister standing alone next to an empty lectern as he addressed the media.

Still, Johnson insisted there was a strong possibility of securing a divorce agreement before Britain is due to leave the 28-nation bloc in just over six weeks.

"Yes there is a good chance of a deal. Yes, I can see the shape of it," Johnson asserted at a separate appearance before reporters at the British ambassador's residence.

EU leaders were far more skeptical.

With the Brexit deadline just 45 days away, the European Commission said the first in-person meeting between Johnson and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker ended with no breakthrough in the impasse over how Britain can leave the EU with a plan in place to manage the divorce.

Britain had yet to offer any "legally operational" solutions to the problem of keeping goods and people flowing freely across the Irish border, the main roadblock to a deal, it said in a



Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, right, addresses a media conference next to an empty lectern intended for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson after a meeting at the prime ministers' office in Luxembourg, Monday, Sept. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

statement.

"Such proposals have not yet been made," the Commission said, adding that officials "will remain available to work 24/7."

Johnson insists the U.K. will leave the EU on the scheduled date of Oct. 31 with or without a Brexit deal. He hopes to strike a revised agreement with the bloc at an EU summit on Oct. 17-18, in time for an orderly departure. The agreement made by his predecessor, Theresa May, was rejected three times by Britain's Parliament, prompting her to resign.

Opponents fear Johnson — who helped lead the 2016 referendum campaign that ended in a vote to leave the EU — is heading full-speed toward a disruptive no-deal Brexit.

Many EU leaders suspect the same thing, and mistrust the brash British leader's populist rhetoric. Johnson has vowed to com-

plete Brexit "do or die," and has compared himself and the U.K. to angry green superhero the Incredible Hulk, telling the Mail on Sunday newspaper: "The madder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets, and he always escapes ... and that is the case for this country."

Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, who also met Johnson on Monday, said the British leader needed to "stop speaking and act." "We need more than just words," he said. "We need a legally operable text to work on as soon as possible."

The key sticking point to a Brexit deal is the so-called "backstop," an insurance policy in May's agreement intended to guarantee an open border between EU member Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland. That is vital both to the local economy and to Northern Ireland's peace process.

British Brexit supporters op-

pose the backstop because it keeps the U.K. bound to EU trade rules, limiting its ability to forge new free trade agreements around the world after Brexit.

Britain has suggested the backstop could be replaced by "alternative arrangements" — a mix of technology to replace border checks and a common area for agricultural products and animals covering the whole island of Ireland. A small but noisy crowd of anti-Brexit protesters booed and shouted "shame on Boris!" as Johnson arrived after lunch for a meeting with Luxembourg prime minister Bettel.

Johnson pulled out of a planned outdoor news conference, saying later that the pair would have been drowned out. Instead Bettel addressed reporters alone, next to an empty lectern, while Johnson issued his statement outside

the British ambassador's nearby residence.

The visibly frustrated Luxembourg leader said Brexit had become a "nightmare," and U.K. and European citizens face huge uncertainty.

"You can't hold their future hostage for party political gains," Bettel said.

"Now it's on Mr. Johnson," he added, gesturing at the empty lectern in front of a Union Jack.

Despite the EU's frustration at the lack of detail, Juncker and Johnson agreed to ramp up the pace of talks, with EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier and U.K. Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay getting involved.

"Over the last couple of weeks there's been a lot of work — papers have been shared — but we are now in the stage where we have to start really accelerating the work," Johnson said. "That was the agreement today."

Monday's meeting kicked off a tumultuous week for Johnson.

On Tuesday, Britain's Supreme Court will consider whether Johnson's decision to suspend the British Parliament for five weeks was lawful, after conflicting judgments in lower courts.

Johnson sent British lawmakers home until Oct. 14, a drastic move that gives him a respite from rebellious lawmakers determined to thwart his Brexit plan.

Last week, Scotland's highest civil court ruled the move illegal because it had the intention of stymieing Parliament. The High Court in London, however, said it was not a matter for the courts. □

Big global climate protests on Friday get union support

BERLIN (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to join world-wide demonstrations this week ahead of a U.N. climate summit in New York, as unions and some businesses lend their support for faster action to fight climate change.

Organizers said Monday that more than 800 events were planned in the United States for Friday's "global climate strike," while in Germany over 400 rallies have been registered. Campaigners are also staging protests in most other European countries, Australia, Japan, India, South Africa, Canada and dozens of other locations. It follows a similar coordinated protest in March that drew many tens of thousands around the world.

"This is an important signal," said Antje von Broock, a spokeswoman for a broad alliance comprising some 200 environmental, youth and church groups in Germany, noting that the



Activists protest during a rally outside the White House in Washington, Friday, Sept. 13, 2019.

Associated Press

demonstrations will take place just days before the U.N. climate summit, where leaders will present their long-term plans for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change has be-

come an increasingly important issue for voters in recent years, particularly in Europe. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel's government plans to announce a package of

measures that would put the country on course to cut its emissions 55% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

Merkel's center-right Christian Democratic Union an-

nounced Monday that it favors establishing a national emissions trading system to reduce the amount of CO2 and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, while providing financial incentives for people to switch to low-carbon cars and heating systems. The center-left Social Democrats, the junior partners in Merkel's coalition, have instead called for a tax on carbon that would then be redistributed to avoid hitting the poor the hardest. Frank Bsirske, the head of Germany's service industry union ver.di, said current scenarios for future climate change are "dystopian" and could lead to drastic sea level rises, putting large parts of the country underwater.

"Even if the extent of global warming is on a smaller scale, it's still dramatic enough to warrant protecting the climate," said Bsirske, whose union is urging members to join the climate protest. □

French professionals join forces to protest pension changes

By SYLVIE CORBET
CLAIRE PARKER

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Thousands of French professionals, including lawyers and doctors, took to the streets of Paris Monday in a new protest against the government's planned pension changes.

The protest saw lawyers, doctors, nurses and others in regulated professions vent their displeasure at the proposed changes that President Emmanuel Macron's government says will simplify France's convoluted pensions system. The government has promised the legal retirement age of 62 won't change, but new conditions may encourage people to work longer.

A large majority of those protesting Monday were lawyers, since the National Bar Council, which initiated the demonstration, claims the proposed changes will double the taxes its members pay.

Wearing their black barris-



Lawyers march during a protest against the planned pension change in Paris, Monday, Sept. 16, 2019.

Associated Press

ters' robes, they marched in Paris' central streets singing "no, no, no to the Macron reform," some waving posters reading "No to the pension tax."

Most lawyers across France were on strike and decided

not to plead any cases and asked for trials to be postponed.

Some demonstrators warned that provinces outside of Paris would suffer most from the reforms, that would see some smaller

law firms to shutter because of higher taxes.

Anne-Laure-Hélène des Ylouses, a lawyer in the Paris area, raised concerns that the new retirement system would deter young people from entering the

profession.

"This puts in danger the economic model of lawyers, and for the youth, it worries them because in effect it will be very hard to establish themselves in a firm."

Nurses, podiatrists and other health workers dressed in white coats marched alongside the lawyers, expressing the same fears.

Céline Ciriani, a podiatrist in the Paris suburb of Corneilles-en-Parisis, said the new pension system "will make us lose a lot and could eventually cause offices to close because we don't have enough money to pay our expenses."

Macron's government argues that the indebted pension system is long overdue for streamlining.

But there is growing opposition to the government's proposals, which will replace the 42 different retirement systems currently linked to certain jobs with a new, unified pension scheme. □

Israeli PM vows to annex 'all the settlements' in West Bank

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Monday to annex "all the settlements" in the West Bank, including an enclave deep in the heart of the largest Palestinian city, in a last-ditch move that appeared aimed at shoring up nationalist support the day before a do-over election.

Locked in a razor tight race and with legal woes hanging over him, Netanyahu is fighting for his political survival. In the final weeks of his campaign he has been doling out hard-line promises meant to draw more voters to his Likud party and re-elect him in Tuesday's unprecedented repeat vote.

"I intend to extend sovereignty on all the settlements and the (settlement) blocs," including "sites that have security importance or are important to Israel's heritage," Netanyahu said in an interview with Israeli Army Radio, part of an eleventh-hour media blitz.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holds up a placard given to him as a gift from Israeli residents of the area, at the start of a weekly cabinet meeting in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

Asked if that included the hundreds of Jews who live under heavy military guard amid tens of thousands of Palestinians in the volatile city of Hebron, Netanyahu responded "of course."

Israelis head to the polls Tuesday in the second

election this year, after Netanyahu failed to cobble together a coalition following April's vote, sparking the dissolution of parliament.

Netanyahu has made a series of ambitious pledges in a bid to whip up support, including a promise

to annex the Jordan Valley, an area even moderate Israelis view as strategic but which the Palestinians consider the breadbasket of any future state. To protest that announcement, the Palestinian Authority held a Cabinet meeting in

the Jordan Valley village of Fasayil on Monday, a day after Israel's Cabinet met elsewhere in the valley.

"The Jordan Valley is part of Palestinian lands and any settlement or annexation is illegal," Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh said at the start of the meeting. "We will sue Israel in international courts for exploiting our land and we will continue our struggle against the occupation on the ground and in international forums."

Critics contend that Netanyahu's pledges, if carried out, would enflame the Middle East and eliminate any remaining Palestinian hope of establishing a separate state. His political rivals have dismissed his talk of annexation as an election ploy noting that he has refrained from annexing any territory during his more than a decade in power. Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 war. □

Leaders of Iran, Russia, Turkey meet over Syria conflict

By **SUZAN FRASER**
ZEYNEP BILGIN SOY
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — The leaders of Russia, Iran and Turkey met in the Turkish capital, Ankara, on Monday to discuss the situation in Syria, with the aim of halting fighting in the northwestern Idlib province and finding a lasting political solution to the country's civil war, now in its ninth year.

Topping the agenda of the meeting was the volatile situation in Idlib — the last remaining rebel stronghold in Syria. A cease-fire went into effect there at the end of August, following a wide four-month offensive by government forces.

The cease-fire has been holding despite some violations that left six people dead last week. A major conflict in Idlib has raised the possibility of a mass refugee flow to Turkey, which already hosts 3.6 million Syrian refugees.

Hundreds of thousands of Syrians, some already dis-



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks to the media after Friday prayers in Istanbul, Sept. 13, 2019, after former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu announced his resignation from Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party.

Associated Press

placed from other parts of the war-torn country, have moved toward Turkey's border to flee Syrian airstrikes, backed by Russia. Idlib is dominated by the al-Qaida-linked group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

"We will address first and foremost the situation on the field in Idlib, the developments east of the Euphrates, the stage reached in the political process and the issue of Syrian refugees," Turkish President Re-

cep Tayyip Erdogan said during his opening remarks. Erdogan hailed the three countries' cooperation on finding a "lasting political solution" and Russian President Vladimir Putin said their joint efforts had helped decrease violence in Syria. But both Putin and Iran's Hassan Rouhani expressed concern over Idlib, warning that it should not be a haven for "terrorists." Monday's talks are the fifth trilateral meeting among

countries that stand on opposing sides of the conflict. Russia and Iran are key allies of Syrian President Bashar Assad while Turkey backs Syrian rebels seeking to oust him.

A major offensive in Idlib was averted last September when Erdogan and Putin agreed in the Russian resort town of Sochi to set up a demilitarized zone in Idlib and open two major highways. Those plans, as well as a Turkish pledge to

tame armed groups in Idlib, have largely failed.

Erdogan has warned that Turkey could "open its gates" and allow Syrians already living in his country to flood Western countries if Turkey is left to shoulder the refugee burden alone.

Despite divergent interests in Syria, Erdogan and Putin have been building closer ties, having met seven times in 2019 alone. Russia has delivered two batteries of the S-400 surface to air missile systems to Turkey and the two countries are cooperating on energy deals. The three leaders would also take up Turkish and American plans for a so-called "safe zone" in northeastern Syria along the Turkish border east of the Euphrates River. This safe zone is an attempt to meet Turkish demands to push away from the border U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces that Ankara considers terrorists, alleging they have ties to a Kurdish insurgency within Turkey. □



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UN mission accuses accountability for Myanmar 'genocide'

By GRANT PECK
Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A special U.N. fact-finding mission has urged that Myanmar be held responsible in international legal forums for alleged genocide against its Muslim Rohingya minority. The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar said in a report Monday wrapping up two years of documentation of human rights violations by security forces that counterinsurgency operations against Rohingya in 2017 included "genocidal acts."

It said the operations killed thousands of people and caused more than 740,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh.

The mission said the threat of genocide continues for an estimated 600,000 Rohingya still inside Myanmar living in "deplorable" conditions and facing persecution. The situation makes the repatriation of Rohingya refugees impossible, it



In this Oct. 22, 2017, file photo, Rohingya Muslim woman, Rukaya Begum, who crossed over from Myanmar into Bangladesh, after the government moved them to newly allocated refugee camp areas, near Kutupalong, Bangladesh.

said.

"The threat of genocide continues for the remaining Rohingya," mission head Marzuki Darusman said in a statement.

The report summarized and

updated six others previously issued by the mission that detailed accounts of arbitrary detention, torture and inhuman treatment, rape and other forms of sexual violence, extrajudi-

cial, summary or arbitrary killings, enforced disappearances, forced displacement and unlawful destruction of property. It is to be presented Tuesday in Geneva to the Hu-

man Rights Council, which established the mission in 2017.

Muslim Rohingya face heavy discrimination in Buddhist-dominated Myanmar, where they are regarded as having illegally immigrated from Bangladesh, even though many families have lived in Myanmar for generations. Most are denied citizenship and basic civil rights.

The homes of many were destroyed during the counterinsurgency operation and there is little sign that refugees will not face the same discrimination if they return.

A plan to repatriate an initial group last month collapsed when no one wanted to be taken back.

The U.N. mission has focused on the Rohingya in Rakhine state but also covered actions by Myanmar's military — known as the Tatmadaw — toward other minorities in Rakhine, Chin, Shan, Kachin and Karen states. □

Associated Press

India arrests senior Kashmir leader under controversial law

NEW DELHI (AP) — A Parliament member who is a senior pro-India politician in Indian-controlled Kashmir was arrested Monday under a controversial law that allows authorities to imprison someone for up to two years without charge or trial.

Farooq Abdullah, 81, who also was the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, was arrested at his residence in Srinagar, the summer capital of the disputed Himalayan region. "We have arrested him, and a committee will decide how long the arrest will be," said Muneer Khan, a top police official.

Abdullah is the first pro-

India politician who has been arrested under the Public Safety Act, under which rights activists say more than 20,000 Kashmiris have been detained in the last two decades.

Amnesty International has called the PSA a "lawless law," and rights groups say India has used the law to stifle dissent and circumvent the criminal justice system, undermining accountability, transparency, and respect for human rights.

Abdullah's residence was declared a subsidiary jail and he was put under house arrest on Aug. 5 when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist-led government in

New Delhi stripped Jammu and Kashmir of semi-autonomy and statehood, creating two federal territories. Thousands of additional Indian troops were sent to the Kashmir Valley, already one of the world's most militarized regions. Telephone communications, cell-phone coverage, broadband internet and cable TV services were cut for the valley's 7 million people, although some communications have been gradually restored.

On Aug. 6, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah denied to the lower house of Parliament that Abdullah had been detained or arrested. "If he (Abdullah) does



In this April 8, 2019, file photo, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah addresses his supporters during an election campaign rally in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir.

Associated Press

not want to come out of his house, he cannot be brought out at gunpoint," Shah said, when other par-

liamentarians expressed concern over Abdullah's absence during the debate on Kashmir's status. □

Split emerges in Venezuela opposition over talks with gov't

By SCOTT SMITH

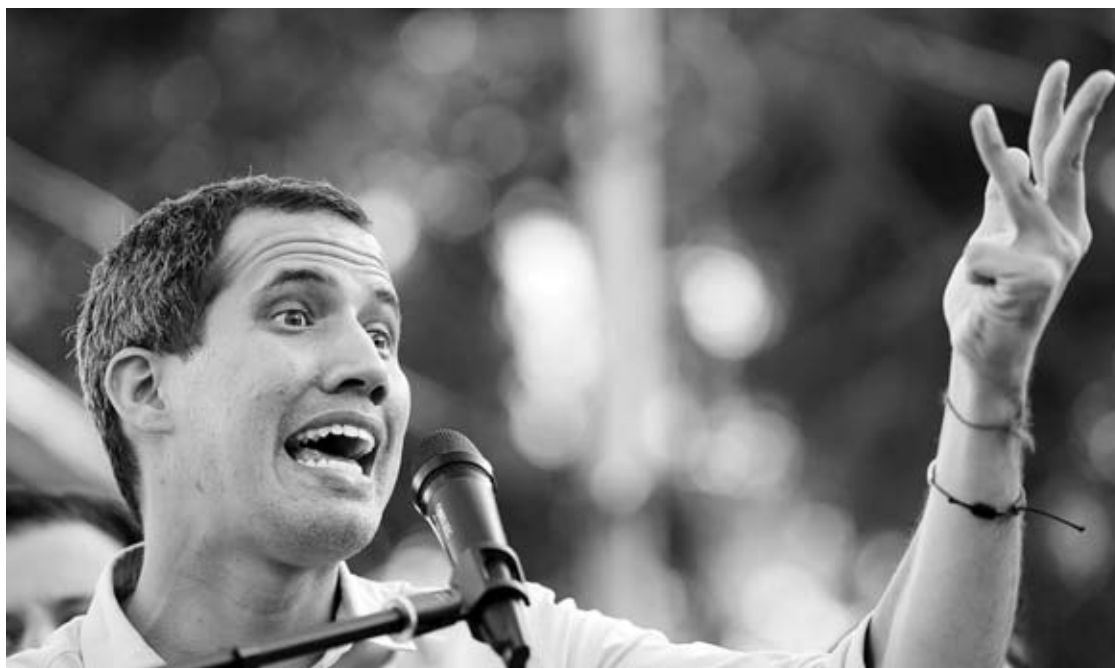
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— A minority group of opposition parties in Venezuela agreed Monday to enter negotiations with President Nicolas Maduro's government without the participation of U.S.-backed opposition leader Juan Guaidó, eroding his efforts to hold together a coalition to confront the socialist administration.

The agreement was signed by representatives of several opposition parties alongside Maduro's top aides in a nationally televised event attended by foreign diplomats.

It marks the first significant split in the anti-Maduro camp since Guaidó, as head of the opposition-controlled congress, declared himself interim president in January, citing what was seen as Maduro's fraudulent re-election last year. Guaidó quickly drew recognition from the U.S. and more than 50 nations. Lawmaker Timoteo Zambrano, an opposition lawmaker who signed the agreement, was critical of the efforts led by the



Venezuela's National Assembly President and self proclaimed interim President Juan Guaido speaks during a rally at the Municipality of El Hatillo, Caracas, Venezuela, Saturday, Sept 14, 2019. Associated Press

larger anti-Maduro parties. He didn't directly mention Guaidó.

Zambrano said he and the others seek to recover time lost due to the "ambition of some and the mistakes of us all." He urged support from the international community.

"We ask the governments of the region and the world to listen, value and support this path," Zambrano said.

The talks will focus on re-

forming Venezuela's electoral board as well as finding a solution to the impasse caused by the creation of a pro-government constitutional assembly to rival the opposition-controlled congress.

At least four opposition leaders appeared on state TV to sign the agreement launching the negotiations, though they represent less than one-tenth of seats in the National Assembly.

They wield far less power than parties like Guaidó's Popular Will, experts said. Guaidó appeared at a separate event Monday, saying he considered the announcement of sideline negotiations with the minority opposition parties a "maneuver" that Maduro's government has employed before to split the opposition.

"We already know what the conclusion was," Guaidó

told The Associated Press, noting that those attempts failed to reach solutions.

Guaidó a day earlier said that negotiations with the government brokered by Norway had been exhausted, saying Maduro and his allies "have blocked a political solution" to the crisis by "refusing to discuss and agree on a sensible proposal." Until recently, the talks held on the Caribbean island of Barbados had been seen as the best chance at resolving Venezuela's crisis. Leaders in Oslo, however, said they left open the possibility of talks.

Despite Guaidó's brave face, some in the opposition acknowledged that by absorbing the attention the new dialogue attempt would complicate efforts both inside and outside Venezuela to secure Maduro's removal.

Geoff Ramsey, a researcher at the Washington Office on Latin America think tank, said this division will complicate negotiations such as those in Barbados. Maduro will be able to claim he's made meaningful concessions, while doing the bare minimum, Ramsey said. □

Mexico celebrates its independence with iconic chile dish

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP)

— The first bite of chiles en nogada, a traditional Mexican dish eaten around the country's independence celebrations, sends a shiver. The salty skin of the poblano chile crunches, the pomegranate seeds that dot it explode between your teeth and the flavors combine to dance in the mouth. Almost instantly, the creamy walnut sauce permeates the meat filling, and just when your palate asks, "What is this deliciousness?" the spices kick in and your senses ask for more.

This sensory cocktail isn't made in just any kitchen. And it can take hours to prepare — meaning only some chefs and true fans of the complicated recipe



In this Sept. 13, 2019 photo, a cook assembles chiles en nogada for clients at Testal restaurant in central Mexico City. Associated Press

are willing to sharpen their knives and dedicate two days each year to stuffing the relatively unsavory chiles. In the kitchen of Arango, a Mexico City restaurant that opened last year, a smile spreads across the face of chef Alejandro Cuatpot-

zo when one speaks about the balance struck by the sweet and salty food.

The dish is traditionally eaten from July through September, and Cuatpotzo estimates he serves up to 100 plates each week during the season.

To do that, his staff of 14 chefs work eight days per month to prepare a recipe that dates to the 19th century and involves, in his case, 30 ingredients.

Cuatpotzo and chiles en nogada were born in the same place: the central state of Puebla.

Versions of the dish's origin vary, but Ricardo Muñoz Zurita — another Mexican chef who is an expert in local cuisine — says that they were prepared for the first time on Aug. 28, 1821.

Gen. Agustín de Iturbide had just signed a treaty giving Mexico its independence from Spain and was on his way to the capital when he stopped in Puebla, where nuns served him chiles en nogada to honor him and celebrate the end of colonization. For that reason, Muñoz Zurita says,

the dish displayed the colors of Iturbide's army banner and the soon-to-be Mexican flag: green, white and red.

It also won the favor of Iturbide, who asked that he be served the dish again in Mexico City.

Nearly 200 years later, chiles en nogada are now a favorite of many.

According to Muñoz Zurita, it's almost "mythical" because it's so ephemeral: its key ingredients are only available three months of the year, so it isn't prepared outside of the season.

Some Mexicans spurn the dish because they find the combination of flavors disagreeable, but in general, it sets off a frenzy evident on social media, with images of chiles en nogada commonly shared before they're devoured. □

LOCAL



Ewald Biemans, owner of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort: The Green Lantern of Aruba



EAGLE BEACH — The Green Lantern is the name of a superhero appearing in American comic books and television series. Going green is defined as making more environmentally-friendly decisions such as to "reduce, reuse and recycle." If we could name one superhero in the field of sustainability, it would be Ewald Biemans, owner of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort. "We are carbon neutral. All you leave with us is your footprint on the beach," he states.

The love of nature has driven him throughout his whole life to think differently. "I was chairman of the environmental commission of the hotel association about 30 years ago, and I brought in people that knew about sustainability – solar panel professionals, water recycling experts, people that teach how to reduce electricity with the goal for everybody to join. Some hotels did, some not. I for sure wanted to have a green resort," Biemans explains. "You need to invest to save in the long run. Omitting CO2 is what you save too. I reuse and recycle. I am not using oil to produce electricity, but solar panels for already 30 years."

50 Years Clear Focus

Biemans was co-owner at Manchebo Resort 50-years-ago and planted all the palm trees you see in this area. "There was a lagoon here where is now the parking. I built the now Bucuti as a wing for Manchebo in the late 80-ies. In 1991 I split off and went on my own with Bucuti." In the Mid-nineties Aruba brought in a lot of foreign workers_ about 30.000 people. From a little quiet and peaceful fishing village without traffic lights it all of a sudden became busier. More housing, more hotels, more people on the beaches which got filthier, garbage in the streets and in the cunucu ... we saw the degradation. "So we started to clean up because I was worried it would become a destination that people don't want to come to anymore which often had happened within the region. We organize the beach clean-ups for 24 years already. Guests participate in it and they love it."

Biemans talks about the oil crises in the nineties and the year 2000. "Every time your electricity and water bills go up but we already started measures in front not to have to increase our rates like a lot of the hotels were obliged to. We implemented motion sensors for lights, we placed water reducers in the showers and toilet bowls, everything to save as much as we can. It is just a way of thinking logically about things." They started to separate shower water from toilet water and began to use the shower water for the plants. "In 1996, I already installed a full irrigation system here." Bucuti was already recycling paper, carton, glass, aluminum and oils for years so when the government decided to close the garbage dump, Bucuti was not that affected. They made a deal years before with Ecotech, the waste management service company, to put the separated garbage in bales and pick it up for free. "We for years already reduced our garbage disposal with 60 % by separating it. I don't have one time plastic in the hotel, with the only exception of garbage bags. We use plastic re-



usable cups, no laundry bags in the rooms, we give thermos bottles to each customer. We tell people not to buy plastic and we have stations to fill up water."

Most Sustainable Resort in the World

Bucuti holds the most eco-certifications in the Caribbean. The resort has achieved 17 consecutive years of Green Globe Certification and in 2016, Green Globe declared Bucuti as the "Most Sustainable Hotel & Resort in the World," naming it to the new elite level of Green Globe Platinum. The resort also holds the distinction of being the first hotel in the Americas to earn the highly coveted ISO 14001 environmental certification every year since 2003. Bucuti is Travelife Gold certified and in 2015 earned the Caribbean's only LEED Silver certification for lodging, a remarkable achievement for retrofitting a property, which is more difficult than incorporating LEED standards in new construction. The resort is also a TripAdvisor Green Leaders Platinum Level member. Biemans, a sought-after guest speaker on eco-tourism, has been honored on numerous occasions both locally and internationally for his environmental preservation work. Biemans is obviously proud of the achievements and strengthens it with some facts. "Let's say you are a typical American couple living in upstate New York and you commute every day to work. Now you have a choice to take a car and drive to the keys of Florida or you can fly down to Aruba with American Airlines' modern jet, most times for 90 % occupied. You spend a week with us and your omission is 60 % less than taking that car driving to Florida and sleeping in hotels along the way." He continues saying that the plane is more efficient than driving as a fact. "It's the taking off and landing that cost energy but you divide it over many people. We talk Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) numbers of emissions per mile flown here. A typical household in the USA is with air-conditioning or heating 24/7, driving at least one hour a day, using almost everything disposable and wasting energy like there is no tomorrow. We capitalize on that and carbon neutral is the result. We consume and omit as much as we produce."

Continued on Page 14

Ewald Biemans, owner of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort: The Green Lantern of Aruba

Continued from Page 13

Farmer at Heart

The sustainability part comes back from Biemans' ancestry and youth. "I am a farmer at heart, I grew up the first seven years of my life on a farm in Austria. I love nature, I love animals and of course my profession which is hotel business and service. Actually it is the same service as a farmer. Your cattle; pigs, chickens, dogs they need to be taken care off and they will return the love. You treat

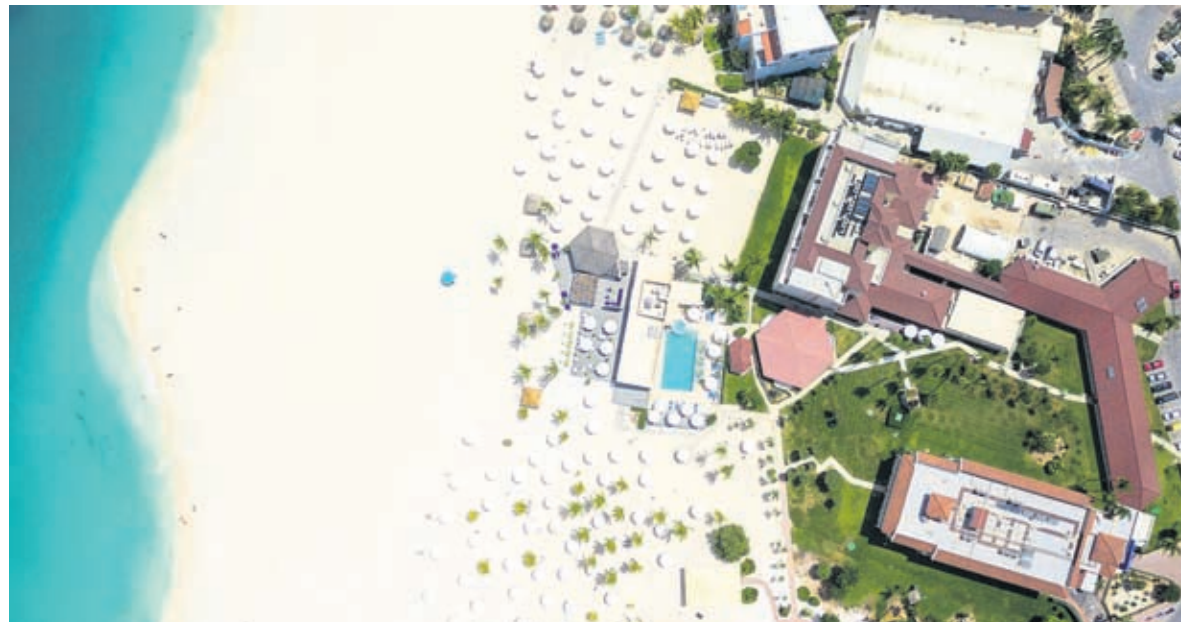
them right you get more results. The same goes for the plants, there are people who communicate with plants. I love plants and grow them." He went into the hotel business because he loves people, giving service and the ambiance of the resort business. It's all about celebration, fun, anniversaries, birthdays and honeymoons, he says. "I could never work in the service industry like a hospital or police force. That to me is too tragic." Biemans went to the hotel school in Austria and partly in Venezuela followed by univer-



sity which he attended in Tallahassee, Florida. "It has a very good international business department." He worked for Hilton and Intercontinental and came to vacation in Aruba. They offered me a job here in the hotel business and I accepted it, here I am 50 years later," Biemans laughs.

Go Out & Preach

His mission is to create more awareness on his beloved island and in the world about sustainability. "People don't realize that one of the main motivations is global warning, you need to start worrying. Sea levels rose for the last 20 years but nobody seems to care meaning that the beach will be gone here in the next 30-40 years." He gives workshops all the time, but locally there is simply not much interest in this area. "I was much more active 20 years ago than I am today. I am still doing a lot though, I go out and preach. But you can't impose anything, you must keep on repeating. Luckily you read about it more and more every day and it will come here eventually. I will never give up." □



Since the beginning of time people have collected and selected all kinds of things and for an infinite use and reasons. All this selecting and discarding contributed in engineering man's success into organized social groups of civilization. For example the world's vegetation; plants were used to build shelters, bridges and transportation, for food, medicine, color pigments, to weave clotting and ropes, for musical instruments, tools and weapons, and all sorts of unimaginable things.



Crecentia cujete: Our Calbas Tree Episode XXXV



In this episode we will focus on a very special tree that played a vital role in the conquest of the Caribbean and survival of its habitants in general. Etnia Nativa's selection in this episode is regarding a very important plant which you can find in Aruba's country side and emphasizing specially on its fruit it gives. This mythological plant mentioned in Popol Vuh, codex, Mayan literature, the so called masters of the infra-world who killed and decapitated Vucub-Hunahpú, then telling to go put his severed skull in a tree that was planted down the road, this tree that had never ever bloomed. This action of placing the skull in and between the branches provoked an instant burst of green rounded fruits that covered the whole tree. A fruit no living being had ever seen before. That's why in some regions



This amazing tree is considered to be a very sacred tree for many ethnic cultural groups in the Americas. Calbas tree seeds have been dispersed all over the tropics during the colonial times for its practicality, interesting shape and reusable resistance. Unfortunately for our island, ne tree less it too many.

This fascinating tree has also suffered discrimination lately by those who considers it as something that belongs to the poor, therefore cut down in demands of constructing new buildings and infrastructure without any consideration or respect.

Continued on Page 15

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The Lazy Lizard | The Market
Shalom Body & Soul Spa
The Collectables

Crecentia cujete: Our Calbas Tree

Episode XXXV

Continued from Page14

We as a small island should soon come to means, wake up and take action and responsibility to guard our nature. Educate ourselves that these trees flowers only during night time and are manly pollinated by bats whose habitats are also threatened by the exactly same expansive demand of land.

We should make it clear that the calbas has a great importance in the lives and mythology of the Aruban and Meso-Amerindian history and societies, and that plant in general carries very practical uses. The calbas fruit is utilized today in many kitchens and to make beautiful and interesting hand crafts and souvenirs.

This round or spherical fruits has a hard shell which can be separated of the pulp and transformed into a recipient, a flask or a maraca. In some places in Mexico oil, sugar and ethanol is extracted from the pulp.

Arubans who still carry information regarding the traditional application and care taking of islands ethnobotanical heritage, should be taken in consideration to recorded their knowledge providing material for further studies for the coming generations. Finding new ways to share ethno-botanical wisdom would surely benefit many when presented in a way it could be applied in a simple and contemporary context of practice.

The common looking tree grows modest in size



with a lot of noted elongated branches, has tear- drop leaves that can fall off, leaving the tree leafless during the dry season. Every tree gives one size and shape of fruit. Flowering occurs directly out of stem and branches. These trees are still fairly common on the island. Many

healing properties have been recorded through the ages from different regions and Amerindian ethnic groups which could reveal potent cures. We invite you to make your appointment at Etnia Nativa and find out about our stories, authentic Aruban stories. □

Divino & Sunset Grille presented: A Night with Rodney Strong



PALM BEACH — Sunset Grille restaurant at the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino organized an elegant evening with fine wines from Rodney Strong and fantastic culinary art from Executive Chef Matt Boland and newly recruited Executive Sous-Chef Katia Soujol last Friday. Wine pairings are a thing! It is a fun way to connect wine, food and company and ensures that you're going to have a genuinely unique experience.

Rodney Strong Vineyards is a family-owned winery based in Healdsburg, California, United States. It was founded in 1959 by wine pioneer and former dancer, Rodney Strong, the winery focuses solely on Sonoma County grape growing and wines. The divine wines are combined with a four-course menu created by Boland and Soujol. American-born, French-trained Chef Boland returned to the Hilton December 2017. He was the one who led the Sunset Grill to numerous AAA Four Diamond Awards in the 80s and 90s and he is a veteran of the Aruban hospitality industry.

About Executive Sous-Chef Katia

Soujol was born and raised in Provence, France; where in the kitchen she learnt how to cook fresh Escargots pick up in spring, or to prep the Bouillabaisse or ratatouille dishes, with Grandma. Chef Katia was trained at the Culinary Institute in Nice, where she was named out Best apprentice of the year and top apprentice of the year of the Provence, Alps and Corsica Regions in Avignon, an Award of Achievement from the Masters Chef of France in 1988. Also she won other several awards since such as best French American Top Chef 2012 Trophy from the bay area. Soujol went in the United States at first with Anaheim Hilton and Towers and worked with Tamarron Hilton Resort Colorado and San Diego Hilton. In 2000 Chef Katia was sponsored for her extraordinary Culinary career achievement by famous Chef Pascal Restaurant in Newport Beach for her US permanent Resident 'Green Card'. She has taught Culinary at the Art Institute of California and Long Beach Community College where she designed the plan of the School New restaurant kitchen in addition she did some workshop with World Famous Chef Alan Wong in Hawaii, Vietnam, Cambodia and India. In 2001, Chef Katia took over the reins of Pastis in West Hollywood, CA, bringing to Los Angeles her unique essence and culinary expertise, earning her considerable credit for her exceptional French Cuisine. In 2002, as the Executive Chef of Pastis Restaurant Chef Katia received critical acclaim for her rich, Nouvelle French Cuisine and impeccable tang from the: Los Angeles Times News Paper/Food. In 2006 after 3 years of teaching in College Chef Katia goes back to warship at the World well know Beverly Wilshire Hotel a Four Seasons in Beverly Hills. In 2013 for the second time The Venetian Macao, China is offering her a job as the Sands Asia Western Chef from which she finally accept where she managed 47 Cooks Chefs and Sous-Chef and been the only Female Chef in Macao SAR. Soujol came back to her home, since the last 2 decade, California but out of the blue she was offer an opportunity in Aruba from which had no idea to well locate it on the map and she decided to come over bringing her knowledge to pass on to the next generation of Culinarian and hopes to finally will settle while been "apatride" STATELESS since her teenage age.



The Dazzling Dinner

The dinner highlighted the taste of Sunset Grille while offering the opportunity to enjoy the perfect paired wines of Rodney Strong. First course presented a Coconut and Citrus Tiradito with Salmon Rilette paired with Rodney Strong Charlotte's Home Suavignon 2017. Second course surprised with a delicious Lobster Thermidor perfectly matched with Rodney Strong Chalk Hill Chardonnay 2016. The Lamb Loin with Mushrooms Gastrique and Blue Cheese Pan Bollo teamed up with Rodney strong Russian River Pinot Noir 2015 and this culinary heaven's journey ended with a warm Chocolate and Espresso Cake and Rodney Strong Symmetry 2014. Chapeau for Soujol's first wine paring dinner, it was excellent mastership. According to Edible San Francisco, this generation that we are part of shows experience-eagerness. We want to be taken on more of a journey than ever before, trusting the experts and ready to learn about what's new out there. Sunset Grille is more than prepared to guide you and indulge in your culinary experience. □

For more event details contact Shareska.gutierrez@hilton.com or call 526 6005.

SPORTS



Fans of NBA could feel impact of China trade wars

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — That LeBron James jersey could get a little more expensive. Companies that make clothing and shoes for the National Basketball Association players are in the crosshairs of President Donald Trump's escalating China trade wars.

So, the question is, will American fans of sports stars like Los Angeles Lakers' James be willing to pay higher prices for the gear? The stakes are high as U.S. sales from sports licensed merchandise including NBA items rang up \$21 billion last year, according to Licensing International, a trade group. Sales on NBAStore.com rose 15% during the 12-month period through August, according to the league. And many of the sports brands ranging from Adidas to Puma rely on China for at least some of their sourcing.

Moreover, experts worry China could impose penalties on Western brands who sell there at a time when business in that country is exploding. Some also believe U.S. fans might turn to counterfeit merchandise if they don't want to pay higher prices.

"When you raise prices on legitimate goods, you encourage the production of illegitimate goods," said Steve Lamar, executive vice president of The American Apparel and Footwear Association, a trade group. "We're definitely seeing pressure on brands. We're just waiting for the other basketball shoe to drop."

Continued on Next Page



Braun's grand slam lifts Brewers past Cardinals 7-6

St. Louis Cardinals center fielder Harrison Bader is unable to catch a double by Milwaukee Brewers' Tyler Austin during the fifth inning of a baseball game Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019, in St. Louis.

Associated Press
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- In this Saturday, March 2, 2019, file photo, Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) controls the ball in the second half during an NBA basketball game against the Phoenix Suns in Phoenix.

Continued from Previous Page
Until now, consumers were largely spared from higher prices in Trump's previous round of import taxes. That has changed. Starting Sept. 1, the U.S. government began collecting 15 percent on \$112 billion in Chinese imports, on a wide array of merchandise including basketball jerseys, basketball shoes, basketballs and even hoops. Higher tariffs are set to hit another batch of Chinese products — \$160 billion worth on Dec. 15 and include other sports products, according to the American Apparel & Footwear Association. President Trump tweeted Wednesday that planned tariff increases on another \$250 billion in Chinese imports, which would include sports bags, would be delayed until Oct. 15, from Oct. 1. Tariff increases are set to go from 25% to 30%. Many sporting goods companies, including Adidas, Under Armour and Spaulding declined to comment on how their business is being affected by the China trade wars. But like many companies, sport brands have been diversifying their sourcing away from China to factories in Vietnam and Bangladesh for the last several years even before escalating tensions between the U.S. and China. Under Armour has been working for several years to reduce sourcing in China. "With current tariffs, we actually are not being affected very much at all,"

Patrick Fisk, president and chief operating officer at Under Armour told CNBC last week. "We only have 10 percent of what comes into the U.S. from China. So the current state, we're OK." Puma announced earlier this year a new multi-year partnership that will make the international sports brand an official marketing partner of the NBA. "Our sector in China has been very strong. We've been growing 15% every quarter," says Puma U.S. CEO Bjoern Gulden, noting it's the fastest growing market ahead of the U.S. and Europe. But he added, "Tariffs and trade wars are not good for the market. It carries uncertainty." Puma has been moving its sourcing out of China over the past two years and now the country accounts for 20 percent of its overall production. Still, Gulden says costs are going up, and he's not sure whether the company will have to raise prices. Gulden and others believe that the top end of the market may be less vulnerable than the lower end. For customers who buy sneakers ranging from \$150 to \$250, an increase may not hurt sales, but that could be a different story for customers who buy shoes in the \$60 to \$70 range, he said. Still, he says no one "has an appetite for higher prices." The tensions between the

U.S. and China come as many sports brands have been digging deeper into China where basketball is a massive business and the NBA's fan base is exploding through social media. The good news is that American brands including Nike who sell there say business remains strong and they haven't seen consumers in China pull back because of the strain. "We have not seen any impact on our business to-date and we continue to see strong momentum as we enter fiscal year 2020," Mark G. Parker, chairman, CEO and president of Nike told analysts during a conference call following its fiscal fourth quarter earnings in June. It reported revenue growth in China up 21% this past fiscal year. Nike says it produces about a quarter of its product in China for the globe. However, its exposure in terms of product produced in China to North America is "relatively modest." There's a silver lining for sportswear makers to Trump's trade war with China, however. Puma's Gulden says that the company is using the same factories in China that used to produce merchandise for the American market for the Chinese market. Previously, factories outside of China produced goods for China. Now, Puma can stay on top of trends faster. "You are much quicker. No duty. No freight," Gulden added. □



In this Aug. 18, 2013, file photo, from front left to right, Russia's Mariya Savinova, Kenya's Eunice Jepkoech Sum, United States' Alysia Johnson Montano and United States' Brenda Martinez compete in the women's 800-meter final at the World Athletics Championships in the Luzhniki stadium in Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

Montaño to receive medals she was cheated out of at worlds

By The Associated Press

American Alysia Montaño will receive bronze medals she was cheated out of by a Russian who finished ahead of her at the 2011 and 2013 world championships but was later disqualified for doping. Montaño said Monday on social media that she had been invited to world championships in Doha, Qatar, where she'll receive the medals for the 800-meter races in a ceremony on Sept. 30. She finished fourth both years but was moved

up in the standings when Russian Mariya Savinova was disqualified for doping. Montaño has been an outspoken voice for athletes who get robbed of their moment on the podium. On Instagram, Montaño thanked Russian whistleblower Yulia Stepanova for exposing the Russian doping and said "athletes who were doping stole precious moments and money from clean athletes including me, who never got the outdoor podium moment that I earned." □

Allyson Felix named to U.S. 4x400 relay pool for worlds

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Decorated U.S. sprinter Allyson Felix will be part of the 4x400 relay pool for the world championships as she rounds into elite form after giving birth. The American squad bound for the world championships in Doha, Qatar, was announced Monday by USA Track & Field. It includes eight reigning world champions and 55 Olympians. The championships run Sept. 27 to Oct. 6 at the air-conditioned Khalifa Stadium. That will come in handy with the

temperatures during the event expected to hover around 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius). An 11-time world champion, Felix won't compete in an individual event after finishing sixth in the 400 at the U.S. championships two months ago. Her performance earned her a place in the 4x400 relay pool as the Americans try to defend their title. The 33-year-old Felix's race at nationals was her first since giving birth to her daughter last November during an emergency C-section. □

Pineiro's 53-yard FG at end lifts Bears past Broncos 16-14

By The Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Eddy Pineiro kicked a 53-yard field goal as time expired, giving the Chicago Bears a wild 16-14 win over the Broncos and their former defensive coordinator Vic Fangio, whose gutsy 2-point call 31 seconds earlier had given Denver the lead.

The Broncos (0-2) thought time had expired when Mitchell Trubisky stepped up and threw a 25-yard pass to Allen Robinson on fourth-and-15 from his 40-yard line. Robinson was tackled at the Denver 35 by Chris Harris Jr.

The clock showed all zeroes and both teams milled around on the field not knowing whether to celebrate a win or lament a loss. Then referee Adrian Hill announced there was 1 second remaining and Chicago was using its last timeout.

Pineiro's winner sent the Bears (1-1) streaming back onto the field in celebration of a victory that seemed so unlikely after they'd surrendered the lead moments earlier.

RAMS 27, SAINTS 9

LOS ANGELES (AP) — With Drew Brees watching from the sideline with an injured hand, the Rams didn't need a no-call to beat the Saints again.

Jared Goff passed for 283 yards and a touchdown and rushed for another score, and the Rams (2-0) stopped New Orleans from scoring an offensive touchdown for the first time since 2016.

The much-anticipated matchup changed dramatically when Brees was injured late in the first quarter. His throwing hand collided with Aaron Donald's outstretched hand while he threw an incompleteness on the Saints' second drive. The NFL's career leader in yards passing spent the afternoon on the Coliseum sideline with his thumb heavily wrapped.

Teddy Bridgewater went 17 of 30 for 165 yards and Alvin Kamara rushed for just 45 yards for the Saints (1-1), who seemed discombobulated without their longtime



Chicago Bears kicker Eddy Pineiro (15) kicks the game-winning field goal as punter Pat O'Donnell (16) holds during the second half of an NFL football game against the Denver Broncos, Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019, in Denver. The Bears won 16-14.

Associated Press

quarterback. New Orleans didn't score an offensive touchdown for only the fourth time in 13-plus seasons under coach Sean Payton, who got a lengthy contract extension before the game.

Todd Gurley rushed for 63 yards and scored his first touchdown of the season late in the third quarter of this rematch of the Rams' 26-23 overtime win in New Orleans last January. That game turned on the infamous uncalled pass interference late in regulation by Rams cornerback Nickell Robey-Coleman, who had six tackles in the rematch.

PATRIOTS 43, DOLPHINS 0

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Antonio Brown caught a 20-yard touchdown pass in his debut for the Patriots, and they scored twice on interception returns in a two-minute fourth-quarter span.

Brown also made an 18-yard catch on his first play for the Patriots (2-0), who signed him Monday. He finished with 56 yards on four receptions, all in the first half.

The NFL allowed the four-time All-Pro receiver to play despite a civil lawsuit filed Tuesday by his former trainer accusing him of sexually assaulting her on three oc-

casions.

New England's defense outscored Miami (0-2) with interception returns for touchdowns of 54 yards by Stephon Gilmore and 69 yards by Jamie Collins Sr. The Patriots totaled seven sacks and four interceptions and earned their most lopsided win in the 108-game history of the series.

FALCONS 24, EAGLES 20

ATLANTA (AP) — Julio Jones hauled in a short pass on fourth down and took it 54 yards to the end zone with 2:10 remaining, giving Atlanta a wild victory over Philadelphia.

The Falcons (1-1) squandered a 17-6 lead against an injury plagued team that lost two of its top receivers, falling behind for the first time when Carson Wentz dove over from the 1 with 3:13 left to give the Eagles a 20-17 edge.

Philadelphia (1-1) had a chance at the end when Wentz converted on fourth-and-14, somehow getting off a pass with a rusher in his chest that Nelson Agholor hauled in between two defenders for a 43-yard completion to the 18. But Atlanta held on, stopping Zach Ertz about a yard short of the marker on another fourth-down play inside the 10 to preserve a much-needed victory.

Jones bailed out Atlanta — and became Atlanta's career leader in receiving yards with his winning score. On fourth-and-3 at the Falcons 46, Jones dropped behind the line to haul in Matt Ryan's short pass, got a crunching block from left tackle Jake Matthews out on the edge and took off down the sideline, easily outrunning Rodney McLeod and Andrew Sendejo without being touched. He finished with five catches for 106 yards and two touchdowns, also hauling in a 4-yard score that gave the Falcons their 11-point lead early in the third quarter.

SEAHAWKS 28, STEELERS 26

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Russell Wilson threw for three touchdowns for Seattle, including a 28-yard rainbow to DK Metcalf midway through the fourth quarter. The Steelers lost starting quarterback Ben Roethlisberger to a right elbow injury late in the first half and fell to 0-2 for the first time since 2013 despite solid play from backup Mason Rudolph, who threw a pair of second-half touchdown passes to Vance McDonald.

Roethlisberger began flexing his right arm after an incompleteness late in the second quarter. He stayed

in to finish the drive before jogging to the locker room. When the 37-year-old QB emerged for the second half, he was wearing a white cap while Rudolph, taken in the third round of the 2018 draft, took the first meaningful snaps of his career.

Rudolph completed 12 of 19 passes for 112 yards, the two scores and an interception, but couldn't quite keep pace with Wilson and the Seahawks (2-0).

Wilson was 29 of 35 for 300 yards and the three TDs, becoming the fifth-fastest quarterback in league history to reach 200 career touchdown passes (114 games). Wilson also ran four times for 24 yards, most of it coming on Seattle's final drive as the Seahawks protected a two-point lead.

A week after escaping Cincinnati with a one-point win, a game in which coach Pete Carroll said his team wasn't particularly crisp, the Seahawks took advantage of a series of mental mistakes by the Steelers (0-2) to win in Pittsburgh for the first time in 20 years.

CHIEFS 28, RAIDERS 10

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Patrick Mahomes bounced back from the first scoreless opening quarter of his career in the regular season by throwing four touchdown passes in a near perfect second period.

The Raiders (1-1) held Mahomes in check for the opening 15 minutes before he carved up an overmatched defense with big play after big play in the second quarter for the Chiefs (2-0).

Mahomes didn't take long to strike, finding Demarcus Robinson open on a blown coverage for a 44-yard touchdown pass on the first play in the second quarter. He didn't slow down from there.

Mahomes finished 30 for 44 for 443 yards. Robinson had six catches for 172 yards and two scores and Kelce had seven catches for 107 yards and a TD to give the Chiefs their ninth win in the past 10 meetings in this long-time rivalry. □

Catch your own dinner with Driftwood!

Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: Hook and Cook your Own Fish!



Oranjestad- Renaissance Marina Downtown is home to the Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fishermen of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood. Herby senior and Herby Junior both share a passion and love for fishing. They know what the local waters have to offer and what fresh fish really means. Over 30 years ago, the idea for the fishing charter was born.

Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

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Ibrahimovic scores 3 goals in Galaxy's victory over Sporting

CARSON, Calif. (AP) — Zlatan Ibrahimovic had a hat trick and broke Los Angeles' season goal record with 26 in the Galaxy's 7-2 victory over Sporting Kansas City on Sunday night.

The 37-year-old Swedish star tied it at 1 in 32nd minute to match the goal record set by Carlos Ruiz in 2002, then gave Los Angeles (14-13-3) a 3-1 lead in the 51st to break the mark and completed the hat trick in the 85th.

Los Angeles snapped a four-match winless streak to move into fifth place in the Western Conference, a point ahead of San Jose and two in front of Portland. Ibrahimovic scored his first goal on a rebound after goalkeeper Tim Melia stopped his penalty kick, then beat Melia with a left-footer from close range to break the record. He also scored the final goal on a left-footer.

Joe Corona gave Los An-



Minnesota United forward Carlos Darwin Quintero (25) lines up his shot for what proved to be the game winning goal in the second half of an MLS soccer game against Real Salt Lake in St. Paul, Minn., Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019. Minnesota United won, 3-1.

Associated Press

geles the lead in the 48th minute on a header off Cristian Pavón's high chip. Uriel Antuna added a goal in the 69th, and Sebastian Lletget struck in the 77th and 79th minutes.

Felipe Gutiérrez scored twice for Sporting (10-13-7).

D.C. UNITED 1, TIMBERS 0

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — An own goal put D.C. United up in the 25th minute and the team held on to beat

Portland.

United got the own goal when Portland defender Bill Tuiloma tried unsuccessfully to clear a cross from Ulises Segura. United (12-10-9) has won two straight on the

road after a three-game losing streak.

Wayne Rooney returned to United's starting lineup after a two-game suspension for violent conduct in the 21st minute of a match against the Red Bulls on Aug. 21. Rooney leads the team with 11 goals and seven assists in 26 league appearances this season. The striker will leave United at the end of the season to become a player-coach for Derby County in England. Portland (13-12-4) lost for the fourth time at home, its most since 2012.

SOUNDERS 4, RED BULLS 2

SEATTLE (AP) — A shot by Victor Rodriguez that was knocked in for an own goal in the 83rd minute put Seattle ahead, and Nico Lodeiro's goal in stoppage time secured the victory over New York.

The Sounders (14-9-7) remained in contention for second place in the MLS Western Conference. □

Truex races into 2nd round with win in opening playoff race

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Martin Truex Jr. clearly had one of the best teams this season as he rolled to four victories before the end of June.

Then he hit a slump of sports, nearly three months without a win, but his Joe Gibbs Racing team remained confident it would challenge for the championship.

A win in the opening race of NASCAR's playoffs solidified their beliefs.

Truex won for the fifth time this season Sunday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and earned an automatic berth into the second round of the playoffs. He's won the playoff opener in three of the last four seasons, including 2017 when he won the Cup title.

"Welcome back," Truex screamed to his team over his radio as he crossed the finish line. He later added "I feel awesome" about his chances to make the final four and race for the championship in the November finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

"If we can get to Homestead, we are going to be tough to handle. But we've got to get there first," he said.

The Truex victory on an up-and-down day for Joe Gibbs Racing still cement-

ed the Toyota team as the organization to beat for the Cup in this 10-race playoff series. JGR has 14 wins this season through 27 races.

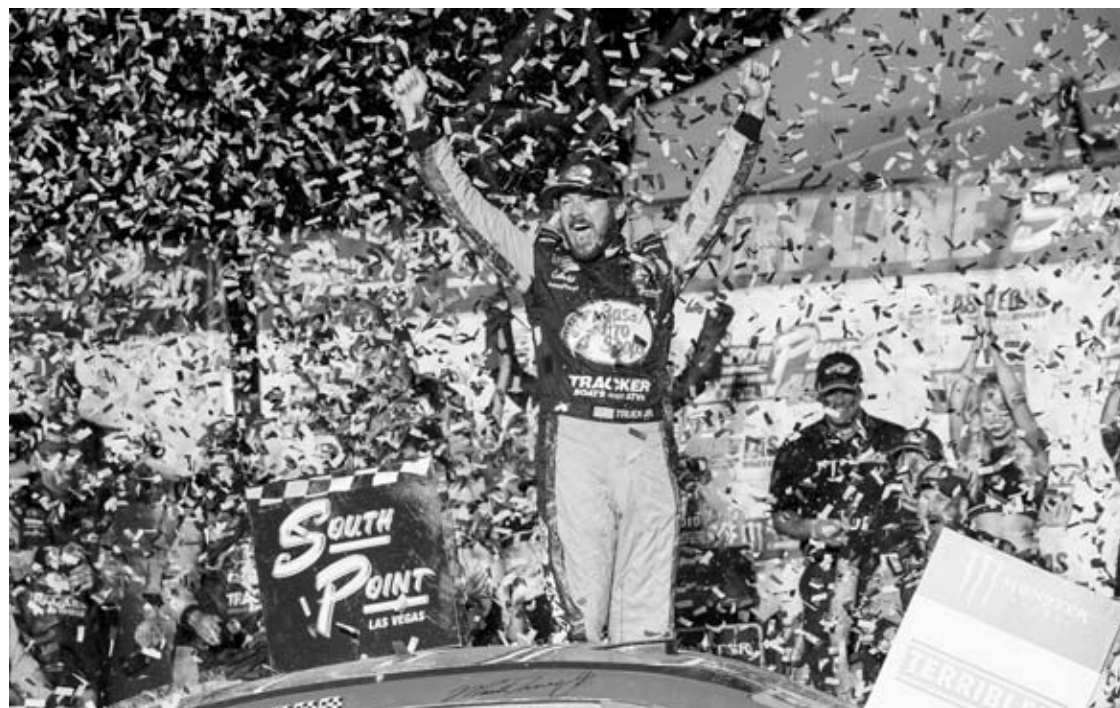
Truex chased down Kevin Harvick, who was slowed by traffic, to cut into Harvick's lead and eventually make the pass for the win — and the automatic second-round spot — on the outside with 20 laps remaining.

"I was able to hustle the car there at the end and get the lead and drive away," Truex said. "These next two weeks are all about bonus points. This is big today to get six (points). Those are really important to get to (the finale)."

Las Vegas was a brutal opener for a handful of title contenders, including Kurt Busch, who crashed when his tire went flat and he finished last in the field. Erik Jones had an earlier mechanical issue and finished four spots higher in 36th.

The top 10 finishers were all playoff contenders as Truex was followed by Harvick, Brad Keselowski, Chase Elliott, Ryan Blaney, Alex Bowman, William Byron, Kyle Larson, reigning series champion Joey Logano and Ryan Newman.

Harvick credited his Stewart-Haas Racing team with making massive gains all weekend to get him to a



Martin Truex Jr. celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

second-place finish.

"We were way off when we got here this weekend. They just kept working. We qualified well," Harvick said. "I knew the Gibbs cars would be tough. Martin was just so much better on the second half of the run. He made up that ground there, was able to stay close enough to us. My car started to get loose and push the front. It was just in kind of a four wheel drift. We really had OK speed at the first stage, but I still felt like the Gibbs cars were better than us." Kyle Busch hit the wall just five laps into the race and

dropped two laps off the pace while his car was repaired. The regular-season champion finished 18th but was on track to finish fourth until he ran into the lapped car of Garrett Smithley nearing the end of the race.

"We are the top echelon in motorsports and we've got guys out here who have never won late model races, it's pathetic. They don't know where to go," Kyle Busch said. Smithley has 11 career Cup starts, but has never won a race in a national series, including ARCA.

Busch in later post-race interviews repeated several times "I'm just here so I don't get fined," — a nod to celebrity pace car driver Marshawn Lynch, who used that line throughout his NFL career.

Pole-sitter Clint Bowyer started the race by leading all four Stewart-Haas Racing drivers to the green flag, but he never could clear the traffic and eventually dropped to a 25th-place finish.

"We just weren't very good tonight. We were just off. Off in all areas," Bowyer said. □

Nadal to open in ATP Cup in Perth; Djokovic on east coast

SYDNEY (AP) — U.S. Open champion Rafael Nadal will start his 2020 season on the opposite side of Australia to Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer when he leads Spain in a group-stage qualifier in the new ATP Cup team competition.

Spain was drawn into Group B with Japan and Georgia and will play in Perth on Australia's west coast, where the U.S. team, Daniil Medvedev's Russia team and Italy will also be competing in Group D.

Nadal collected his 19th

major title, moving within one of Federer's record for men, when he held off Medvedev 7-5, 6-3, 5-7, 4-6, 6-4 in a U.S. Open final that lasted nearly five hours. Nadal remained at No. 2 in the rankings, behind Djokovic, and Medvedev moved up to career-best No. 4.

Djokovic's Serbia squad was drawn into Group A along with France and South Africa in one of two groups based in Brisbane on Australia's east coast, along with Australia, Germany, Canada and

Greece in Group F.

No. 3-ranked Federer's Swiss team will open in Group C against Belgium and Britain in Sydney, where Group E — containing Austria, Croatia and Argentina — will also be based. There are five spots still open in the 24-country tournament which starts in the three cities on Jan. 3 and will double as the season-opening event for the men's tennis tour.

Eight teams from the six-day group stage will advance to the knockout rounds, which will continue



Rafael Nadal, of Spain, reacts after defeating Daniil Medvedev, of Russia, to win the men's singles final of the U.S. Open tennis championships Sunday, Sept. 8, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

in Sydney until Jan. 12.

The ATP says all players in the top 10, and 27 of the top 30 players in the rankings, have committed to

playing in the ATP Cup.

The Australian Open, the first major of the season, is set to start Jan. 20 in Melbourne. □

Betances, Montgomery make season debuts in Yanks' loss

TORONTO (AP) — Pitchers Dellin Betances and Jordan Montgomery made their season debuts for the Yankees after lengthy layoffs. Betances, a 31-year-old right-hander, recovered from a strained lat muscle and struck out Reese McGuire and Brandon Drury, his only two batters. New York hopes Betances will be a factor in the playoffs, joining an already strong bullpen that includes Aroldis Chapman, Zack Britton, Adam Ottavino, Tommy Kahnle and Chad Green. Recovered from Tommy John surgery, Montgomery made his first major league appearance since May 1 last year. He allowed three runs and four hits in two innings. He threw 26 of 41 pitches for strikes. Randal Grichuk homered twice, including a tiebreaking three-run drive in the fifth off Nestor Cortes Jr. (5-1). T.J. Zeuch (1-0) pitched 5 1/3 innings for his first big league win, and Ken Giles got his 20th save.



Toronto Blue Jays Randal Grichuk is met at home plate by teammates Cavan Biggio and Bo Bichette after hitting a three-run home run against the New York Yankees in the fifth inning of a baseball game in Toronto, Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019.

Associated Press

ORIOLES 8, TIGERS 2

DETROIT (AP) — Edwin Jackson (3-10) allowed five runs in five innings for Detroit (44-104), which lost two of the first three games

of the four-game series against the Orioles (49-100) and opened a 4½-game advantage for the worst record in the major leagues — and the top pick in next

June's amateur draft.

Asher Wojciechowski (3-8) won for the first time since July 26, allowing two runs and eight hits in five innings. He had been 0-5 in his pre-

vious eight starts.

Trailing 2-1, the Orioles took the lead in a three-run third that included Dwight Smith Jr.'s two-out triple, Hanser Alberto's run-scoring bunt single and tiebreaking two-run homer by Rio Ruiz.

ASTROS 12, ROYALS 3

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Wade Miley (14-5) allowed two runs and in six innings, rebounding from a pair of bad starts, and Houston tied the Yankees for a big league-leading 98 wins.

Josh Reddick's five hits included a two-run homer.

Jakob Junis (9-14) gave up five runs and seven hits in 2 2/3 innings, his shortest outing in 77 career starts.

ATHLETICS 6, RANGERS 1

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Sean Manaea (2-0) limited Texas to three singles over six scoreless innings, Marcus Semien became the third Oakland slugger with 30 homers and the Athletics won their sixth straight to move 1½ games ahead of Tampa Bay for the first AL wild card. □

Red Sox on track for \$13M luxury tax despite mediocre record

By **RONALD BLUM**
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Boston Red Sox are on track to pay a \$13.05 million luxury tax for a season in which they are likely to miss the playoffs.

The World Series champions' payroll for purposes of the tax increased from \$239.7 million on opening day to \$242.8 million on Aug. 31, according to calculations by the commissioner's office obtained by The Associated Press. That is well over the \$206 million threshold where the tax begins.

As of opening day, the Red Sox were projected for an \$11.76 million tax.

Boston entered Saturday with a 77-70 record, 8½ games out for the second AL wild card with 15 games remaining. The Red Sox fired president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski last weekend.

Because the Red Sox are over the luxury tax threshold for the second straight



Boston Red Sox's Mookie Betts reacts after popping out in the third inning against the Toronto Blue Jays in a baseball game Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019, in Toronto.

Associated Press

year, they pay at a 30% rate on the first \$20 million over \$206 million and a 42% rate on the next \$20 million. The Red Sox finished with a \$239.5 million luxury tax payroll last year, when the threshold was \$197 million, and because they were more than \$40 million over, their top draft pick this year

was dropped 10 places to 43rd overall as a penalty. The New York Yankees have the second-highest tax payroll at \$233.9 million, up from \$225.9 million on opening day, causing their projected tax to rise to \$6.54 million from \$3.98 million. Because the Yankees dropped under the tax

threshold in 2018 for the first time since it began in 2003, they pay at a 20% rate on the first \$20 million over and a 32% rate on the next \$20 million.

The Chicago Cubs are third at \$233.8 million, up from \$229.9 million on opening day. Their projected tax jumped to \$6.34 million from \$5.26 million.

The Los Angeles Dodgers are under the threshold for the second straight season after going over five years in a row at a total tax of nearly \$150 million.

Three teams are headed to tax bills, up from Boston and Washington last year. Houston is fourth this season at \$202.7 million.

Final figures, including performance and award bonuses, will be calculated in December. Luxury tax payrolls are based on the average annual values of contracts for players on 40-man rosters and include \$14.5 million per team in benefits.

Among payrolls calcu-

lated by 2019 salaries and prorated shares of signing bonuses, Boston is first at \$227.9 million, followed by the Yankees at \$225.3 million, the Cubs at \$217.2 million, the Dodgers at \$201.2 million and Washington at \$196.8 million.

San Francisco, already likely to miss the playoffs, is sixth at \$181.5 million, followed by St. Louis (\$175.7 million), Houston (\$168.8 million) and the Los Angeles Angels (\$164.4 million), who already have been eliminated with more than two weeks remaining in the regular season.

Other playoff contenders include Philadelphia (10th at \$159.5 million), the New York Mets (12th at \$145.3 million), Atlanta (14th at \$135.6 million), Milwaukee (17th at \$130.4 million), Minnesota (18th at \$125 million), Cleveland (19th at \$122.2 million), Arizona (22nd at \$108.6 million), Oakland (25th at \$95.3 million) and Tampa Bay (30th at \$66.4 million). □

Rizzo sprains ankle for Cubs, who sweep Bucs

By The Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Star first baseman Anthony Rizzo was pulled from a game Sunday with a sprained right ankle, putting a damper on the Chicago Cubs' 16-6 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates that completed a three-game sweep.

Rizzo was injured fielding a bunt at first base, had to be helped off the field and could not put pressure on the leg. X-rays taken at Wrigley Field showed no fractures. He'll get an MRI on Monday.

Chicago's postseason pursuit has already been hindered by an injury to short-stop Javier Báez, who is out for the rest of the regular season with a hairline fracture of his left thumb.

The Cubs maintained their one-game lead over Milwaukee for the second NL wild card.

Kris Bryant homered twice, and Ian Happ, Kyle Schwarber and Jonathan Lucroy also connected for the Cubs, who outscored the Pirates 47-15 in the series.

Brad Wieck (1-1) struck out both batters he faced. Trevor Williams (7-7) allowed seven runs in 2 1/3 innings.

DODGERS 3, METS 2

NEW YORK (AP) — Jedd Gyorko came off the bench late and played a big role in rallying Los Angeles to a victory that damaged New York's dwindling wild-card chances.

Gyorko scored the tying run in the eighth inning on Chris Taylor's double and hit an RBI single off Seth Lugo (6-4) with two outs in the ninth to put the NL West champions in front.

Brandon Nimmo laced a two-run triple for the Mets, who managed only three hits and wasted an excellent start from Zack Wheeler. They dropped four games behind the Chicago Cubs for the second NL wild card to with 13 to go.

Milwaukee is three games ahead of New York.

Scuffling closer Kenley Jansen (5-3) worked a perfect eighth, and Kenta Maeda got two outs for his fifth career save and second this season.

BREWERS 7, CARDINALS 6

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Ryan Braun overcame a 4-3 deficit with a grand slam off Junior Fernández with two outs in the ninth. Milwaukee won for the ninth time in 10 games and closed within three games of the NL Central-leading Cardinals.

Jon Gant (10-1) walked the bases loaded in the ninth.

Tommy Edman hit a two-run homer with one out in the bottom half off Josh Hader, who struck out Harrison Bader and pinch-hitter Tyler O'Neill for his 33rd save. Bader hit a pair of solo homers.

Matt Albers (7-5) got two outs.

RED SOX 6, PHILLIES 3

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Christian Vázquez homered twice, including his first career grand slam, and drove in a career-high five runs.

Andrew Benintendi had a pair of hits for the defending World Series champions, who have won three in a row. Boston began play trailing Tampa Bay by 10 games for the AL's second wild card. Rick Porcello (13-12) allowed two runs and five hits in five innings, and Brandon Workman pitched a scoreless ninth for his 14th save. Rhys Hoskins homered for Philadelphia, which fell 4½ games behind the Cubs. Jason Vargas (6-8) gave up five runs — four earned — in three innings.

REDS 3, DIAMONDBACKS 1

PHOENIX (AP) — Eugenio Suárez homered twice to tie the New York Mets' Pete Alonso for the major league lead with 47 homers, and Trevor Bauer (11-12) held his former team to one run and four hits over eight innings as Arizona dropped 5½ games behind the Cubs



Chicago Cubs' Anthony Rizzo is tended to after spraining his ankle during the third inning of a baseball game against the Pittsburgh Pirates Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019, in Chicago.

Associated Press

Raisel Iglesias pitched the ninth for his 31st save.

Zac Gallen (3-6) was charged with three runs on five hits in 5 2/3 innings.

NATIONALS 7, BRAVES 0

WASHINGTON (AP) — Aníbal Sánchez (9-8) allowed three hits in seven innings to beat his former team for the third time this season.

Howie Kendrick homered and drove in three runs as Washington clinched its eighth winning season in a row and remained 1½ games ahead of Chicago for the top NL wild card.

Atlanta's magic number to clinch the NL East remained at four as the Braves were blanked for the fourth time,

the fewest in the NL.

Max Fried (16-6) allowed five runs on six hits and three walks in 2 1/3 innings.

GIANTS 2, MARLINS 1

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Mike Yastrzemski scored the go-ahead run in the eighth on Ryne Stanek's second wild pitch after Yastrzemski and Brandon Belt reached on consecutive one-out singles against Jarlin García (3-2).

Johnny Cueto pitched five scoreless innings in his second game back from Tommy John surgery.

Tyler Rogers (2-0) struck out one in a perfect eighth, and Will Smith worked around a walk and a wild pitch in the ninth for his 33rd save. Gi-

ants rookie Mauricio Dubón homered.

ROCKIES 10, PADRES 5

DENVER (AP) — Ryan McMahon hit two home runs and drove in four runs as Colorado finished a three-game sweep that ensured San Diego's ninth straight season without a winning record.

San Diego (68-81) has not won more than 77 games since 2010. The Padres are one defeat from matching the team mark for consecutive losing records, set from their expansion season of 1969 through 1977.

Sam Howard (1-0) pitched 1 2/3 innings. Cal Quantrill (6-8) allowed four runs and six hits in three innings. □

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Frustrated with event ticketing? New ventures try to help

By JAMIE STENGLE

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) —

Event organizers hoping to eliminate ticket scams and huge markups in the secondary market are increasingly turning to companies that use technology to allow fans to buy and resell their tickets while putting caps on prices.

Partnering with such companies allows event organizers to take control of the resale of their tickets. Fans who can't go can return their tickets, which can be reissued to someone who wants to go, helping ensure that venues are filled with fans.

"As in many other areas of our economy, technology is racing ahead to try and address some of the issues that we and others have identified — and any consumer who has tried to buy a ticket recently can probably attest to," said John Breyault of the National Consumers League.

The U.S. ticketing industry is sporadically regulated: Pursuit of those who violate the law by using ticket-buying software known as bots is rare, and laws capping the resale price of tickets are difficult to enforce.

"I think it's great that there's a lot of entrepreneurial activity in this space because



In this photo taken Friday, June 21, 2019, FlipTix CEO Jaime Siegel demonstrates his company's application at the Clusterfest comedy event in San Francisco.

Associated Press

this market is pretty broken, but I also think some government intervention would help too," said Eric Budish, a University of Chicago economics professor.

Sound Nightclub in Los Angeles decided to work with London-based mobile ticketing company Dice to make sure that fans pay the price they've set — usually \$15 to \$30 for musical acts — and don't end up with fake tickets.

"We make a really, really

concerted effort to keep our ticket prices as low as we possibly can to make sure that people have a good fan experience," said Megan Gaver, director of operations at Sound Nightclub.

Tickets to events are bought on the Dice app, then delivered and linked to the buyer's cellphone. If an event sells out, a waitlist starts. Ticketholders who can't make it can return tickets for a full refund.

The app also lets someone send their ticket to a friend. "We just cut off the scalpers' supply completely," said Shanna Jade, head of music for North America for Dice.

The secondary market, though, does give those buying and selling tickets options: Sellers can pick the asking prices, and buyers may be able to find tickets at below face value.

Aimee Campbell, a spokeswoman for StubHub, the

world's largest ticket marketplace, said that on average, about half of their tickets sell for face value or below. She also said the notion of face value is "becoming fairly obsolete" as some primary ticket sellers have started adjusting ticket prices based on demand.

"We do believe that an open market — where the market sort of figures itself out — is going to ultimately be better," Campbell said, adding that her company offers guarantees to buyers and sellers.

With the San Francisco-based online ticket exchange Lyte, those returning tickets to sold out shows are offered a price — usually a full refund though sometimes a bit more or a bit less, depending on how oversold they are, said CEO and founder Ant Taylor. Tickets are resold at price lower than they're going for on the secondary market, he said.

"What actually ends up happening is the scalpers who are sitting in the secondary market are having a much harder time finding buyers and making money," Taylor said. "And so it has the effect of actually driving those crazy secondary market prices down." □

Virtual reality used to highlight uranium contamination



In this Sept. 6, 2019, photo provided by Ways of Knowing, audience members try out virtual reality headsets to watch "Ways of Knowing" a film titled "Ways of Knowing," which was directed by artist Kayla Briet, at the El Morro Events Center in Gallup, N.M.

GALLUP, N.M. (AP) — Activists are using virtual reality technology to focus on areas of the Navajo Nation affected by uranium contamination.

The arts collective Bombshelltoe has collected 360-degree footage of land near Churchrock, New Mexico, to show how people and the land have

changed since a 1979 uranium mill spill, the Gallup Independent reports.

The film, titled "Ways of Knowing," was directed by artist Kayla Briet.

The project started four years ago after Washington, D.C.-based nuclear policy program manager Lovely Umayam met Navajo activist Sunny Dooley at an event in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Filmmaker Adriel Luis is also a co-producer of the movie.

"Sunny asked us during this meeting, 'Where is your heart?' And it caught my - along with everyone else's - attention," Umayam said. In 1979, a dam on the Navajo Nation near Church Rock broke at a uranium

mill's evaporation pond, releasing 94 million gallons (356 million liters) of radioactive waste into the Puerco River.

It was the largest accidental release of radioactive material in United States history and three times the radiation released at the Three Mile Island accident. The radiation contaminated not only water but the food chain. Cattle in western New Mexico later showed higher levels of radiation.

Dooley, who lives in Chil Tah, New Mexico, said she has felt the direct effects of the big spill that went down the Rio Puerco and contaminated the water and soil in her com-

munity.

During a recent presentation of the virtual reality footage, Dooley talked about her daily life of not being able to have running water in her home because it is contaminated. "I have to come to Gallup to get my water and take it back home," she said.

Umayam said the group wanted to use the new technology of virtual reality with the stories to bring a true experience and show the impact of uranium mining.

She said the project is close to being finished, but with every presentation they get more information and make tweaks to the system. □

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& private roof top patio

Stocks slip as surge in oil brings fresh economic worries

By STAN CHOE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Stock markets around the world took an apprehensive step backward Monday after an attack on Saudi Arabia's biggest oil processing facility sent the price of oil surging.

The attack, which Yemeni rebels said they were behind, raised worries about the risk of more disruptions for oil at a time when the global economy's strength is already seen as shaky. President Donald Trump warned that the United States was "locked and loaded" to respond as his administration pinned the blame for the attacks on Iran.

Crude prices soared around 12%, while prices for Treasuries, gold and other investments seen as less risky rose.

The S&P 500 was down modestly, and stocks across the New York Stock Exchange were nearly evenly split between winners and losers. Energy stocks climbed with the price of oil, while airlines and other companies that have big oil and fuel bills were sharply lower.

The stock market has been volatile since the summer, as worries waxed and waned about the U.S.-China trade war. The most recent move for stocks had been higher, boosted by renewed optimism in recent weeks about easing tensions between Wash-



John Wilson, with the New York Stock Exchange, monitors stock activity, Monday, Sept. 16, 2019.
Associated Press

ington and Beijing, and the S&P 500 had climbed back within 1% of its record. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose the past eight trading sessions.

KEEPING SCORE: The S&P 500 dipped 0.3%, as of 11 a.m. Eastern time, after paring a loss that hit 0.5% shortly after trading opened. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 139 points, or 0.5%, to 27,079, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.4%. Small stocks in the Russell 2000 index were better performers, and it climbed 0.6%.

ENERGY SPIKE: The attack in Saudi Arabia caused a big disruption to oil supplies, but only a temporary one. Other countries can release some of the

oil supplies they've built up in reserves to make up for the loss, analysts said. The bigger threat is the worry about more attacks in the future.

"At a time when oil markets have been in the shadows of a weak global macro-economic backdrop, the attack on critical Saudi oil infrastructure calls into question the reliability of supplies from not just one of the largest net exporters of crude oil and petroleum products but also the country that holds most of the world's spare production capacity," Barclays analyst Amarpreet Singh wrote in a report.

Benchmark U.S. crude jumped more than \$6 to \$61.48 per barrel. Brent

crude, the international standard, rocketed up \$7.21 to \$67.43 per barrel. That helped energy stocks in the S&P 500 surge 2.7%, the only sector among the 11 that make up the index to rise. Marathon Oil gained 9.8%, Devon Energy rose 7.7% and oilfield services provider Halliburton climbed 7%.

PAIN AT THE PUMP: Airlines have huge fuel bills, and any rise in the price of oil can hurt them. American Airlines Group, which spent \$3.7 billion on fuel and taxes in the first half of the year, fell 4.7% for one of the biggest losses in the S&P 500. United Airlines lost 2.6%, and Delta Air Lines lost 2.3%. Cruise ships also burn lots of fuel, and Carnival lost 1.7%.

STRIKE ONE: General Motors sank 3.1% after more than 49,000 members of the United Auto Workers went on strike. The union and company have been locked in contract talks, and it wasn't clear how long the walkout would last.

WEEK AHEAD: The week's headline event is the Federal Reserve's meeting on interest rates. Investors are confident the central bank will cut short-term rates by a quarter of a percentage point to a range of 1.75% to 2%. It would be the second such cut in two months, as the Fed tries to protect the economy from a global slowdown and the effects of the U.S.-China trade war. Other central banks around the world are also making moves to help their economies amid slowing global growth. The European Central Bank last week cut interest rates and restarted a bond-buying stimulus program.

HAVENS: Prices for U.S. government bonds rose as investors moved into safer investments. Yields for bonds fall when their prices rise, and the yield on the 10-year Treasury dropped to 1.84% from 1.90% late Friday. The yield on the two-year Treasury, which moves more on expectations for Fed policy, sank to 1.75% from 1.79%.

Gold, another investment seen as a safer place to park money, rose \$12.20 to \$1,511.70 per ounce. □

Conceptis Sudoku



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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

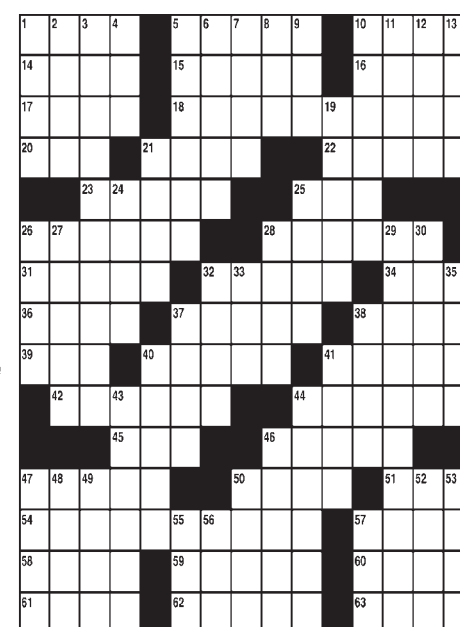
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| | 8 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| | 1 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 8 |
| | 7 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| | 5 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| | 6 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 3 |
| | 3 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| | 9 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 4 |

ACROSS

- 1 Sidewalk's edge
5 Eiffel Tower's location
10 Farm machine
14 Length times width
15 Nimble
16 Midwest state
17 Deadly critters
18 Gathering
20 VP Rockefeller's initials
21 Dig for ore
22 Dishwasher cycle
23 Enlighten
25 Charge for services
26 Without difficulty
28 Wild animals
31 Store employee
32 Sparkle
34 ___ room; home pool table's spot
36 Suggestion
37 Pass out
38 Twiggy's skirt
39 Fall month: abbr.
40 TV comic Soupy
41 Seashore
42 Manor & the land around it
44 Purple dinosaur
45 Actress
McClanahan
46 Adhere
47 "___ a Hot Tin Roof"
50 Other ___; besides
51 "___ Lazy River"
54 Very funny
57 Use shears
58 Roadrunner's sound
59 Standing straight
60 Not wacky
61 Chopping tools
62 Classroom
furniture
63 Irritates

DOWN

- 1 James or Scott
2 Word before
Major or Minor



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

9/17/

Monday's Puzzle Solved

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | W | A | M | | S | A | N | D | | C | L | O |
| P | A | C | E | R | | P | A | A | R | | H | O |
| U | N | C | L | E | | A | M | B | U | L | A | N |
| R | T | E | | L | A | Y | | | | D | A | N |
| | | | P | A | I | L | S | | | G | I | G |
| C | I | T | I | E | S | | | V | E | R | E | E |
| A | D | A | M | S | | P | A | I | R | S | | N |
| R | I | B | S | | G | O | D | L | Y | | F | G |
| P | O | L | | A | R | O | S | E | | P | E | A |
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| S | P | E | D | | Y | E | A | R | | S | T | E |

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9/17

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 38 Dawn, for short | 49 Sequoia or spruce |
| 40 Steam bath | 50 Foot digits |
| 41 Son of Adam | 52 Bubble gum's color |
| 43 Girl Scout groups | 53 Riddles |
| 44 Explosions | 55 As __ as a beet |
| 46 Connors or Norris | 56 Wrath |
| 47 Havana's land | 57 TV crime drama series |
| 48 High point | |

Scientists succeed in creating northern white rhino embryos

Associated Press
CREMONA, Italy (AP) — Scientists announced Friday they have succeeded in creating two embryos of the near-extinct northern white rhino as part of an international effort to save the species, which is down to just two animals worldwide, both of them female. The embryos, created in the lab with eggs taken from the females and frozen sperm from dead males, are now stored in liquid nitrogen, to be transferred into a surrogate mother —

a southern white rhino — in the near future. "Today we achieved an important milestone on a rocky road which allows us to plan the future steps in the rescue program of the northern white rhino," said Thomas Hildebrandt of the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research in Germany. The institute is part of an international consortium of scientists and conservationists that has been planning and developing the procedure for years. □

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Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editor in Chief

Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Editors

Richard Brooks
Jeancarlo Trinidad

Sales

Linda Reijnders
(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Cristian Soto Garcia
Pilar Flores
Juan Luis Pinto

Columnists

Anthony Croes
Joris Zantvoort
Shanella Pantophlet
Steve Francees
Thais Franken

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
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U.S. biologists eye unusual deaths of Alaska ice seals

By DAN JOLING

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)

— Seals that rely on sea ice off Alaska's northwest coast have been dying at uncommon rates, and federal marine mammal biologists Thursday declared an "unusual mortality event." The cause of death for nearly 300 ringed, bearded and spotted seals since June 1, 2018, is not known, according to the fisheries arm of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the management agency for the marine mammals.

"We're looking at a broad spectrum of possible causes and trying to rule out what we can and narrow it down," NOAA Fisheries spokeswoman Julie Speegle said.

Viruses, bacteria and algal blooms are possible causes. Water temperature in the northern Bering Sea and the Chukchi Sea the last two summers have been higher than normal. The agency is looking at possible ecosystem influences, including diminished sea ice, Speegle said.



This undated photo provided by the U.S. National Park Service shows a dead seal found on a beach near Kotzebue, Alaska.

Alaska Native coastal communities hunt all three seals for meat and hides as part of a subsistence life.

NOAA Fisheries received reports of 282 dead seals, almost five times more than the average number of reported strandings, according to the agency. The count included 85 bearded seals, 66 ringed seals, 40

spotted seals and 91 seals that were not identified.

The deaths occurred over all age groups. The deaths both years occurred mostly from June to September. Some stranded seals were missing fur or were skinnier than normal, but the time between death and discovery of a carcass hinder investigators.

"Many of the seals have been pretty badly decomposed so it's been hard to identify exactly what the fat layer is," Speegle said. Federal law defines an unusual mortality event as strandings that involve a significant die-off and demand an immediate response. The declaration allows the agency to focus

resources on an investigation.

Bearded seals get their name from short snouts covered with thick, long, white whiskers. Bearded seals give birth and rear pups on drifting pack ice.

Ringed seals are the smallest of Alaska's ice seals and are the main prey of polar bears. They get their name from small, light-colored circles on their coats.

Ringed seals are the only seals that thrive in completely ice-covered Arctic waters. They use strong claws to maintain breathing holes in thick ice and give birth in lairs dug in snow that accumulates on top of ice. Young pups cannot survive in cold water until they have grown a blubber layer.

Spotted seals are medium-size seals with light coats and dark spots. They often are found at the outer margins of shifting ice floes.

NOAA Fisheries also declared an unusual mortality event following abnormal molting and deaths of ice seals and walrus from 2011 to 2016. □

Associated Press

No new measles cases reported in fading U.S. outbreak



In this March 27, 2019, file photo, a woman receives a measles, mumps and rubella vaccine at the Rockland County Health Department in Pomona, N.Y.

Associated Press

By MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The nation's worst measles epidemic in 27 years could be in its final stages as a week went by with no new reported cases.

"To get to zero is tremendously encouraging," said Jason Schwartz, a Yale University expert on vaccination policy.

The current epidemic emerged about a year ago and took off earlier this year, with most of the cases reported in Orthodox Jewish communities in and around New York City. It started with travelers who had become infected overseas but spread quickly among unvaccinated people.

In the spring, 70 or more new cases were being reported every week. Not long ago, the nation that saw that many measles

cases in a whole year.

So far this year, 1,241 cases have been confirmed — a number that didn't rise last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Monday. The last time the CDC reported no new measles cases was 11 months ago.

New York officials responded to the explosion of measles cases with a wave of measures, including education campaigns to counter misinformation about vaccine safety and fines for people who didn't get vaccinated.

The epidemic has threatened the United States' nearly 2-decade-old status as a nation that has eliminated measles. The status could come to an end if the disease spreads among Americans for a year or more. Other countries, including Greece and the United Kingdom, re-

cently lost their elimination status amid a global surge in the disease.

Measles outbreaks are typically declared over when 42 days pass without a new infection. If no new cases crop up, the national outbreak would likely end on or about Sept. 30 — just before officials might have to decide on the U.S. elimination status.

The loss of elimination status in the U.S. could take the steam out of measles vaccination campaigns in other countries, said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University vaccine expert.

Health ministers around the world might say, "Why should we strive for elimination?"

We'll just do the best we can to control measles, but we won't go the extra several miles to get to zero," Schaffner said. □

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Women's Hall of Fame inducts Sotomayor, Fonda, Allred

By CAROLYN THOMPSON
Associated Press

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, actress Jane Fonda and attorney Gloria Allred were among the inductees at the National Women's Hall of Fame on Saturday.

The Class of 2019 inducted into the hall in upstate New York also included activist Angela Davis, attorney Sarah Deer, fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg, retired Air Force fighter pilot Nicole Malachowski, the late artist and suffragist Rose O'Neill and the late U.S. Rep. Louise Slaughter of New York.

Composer Laurie Spiegel was honored for her electronic music compositions, and molecular biologist Flossie Wong-Staal for work that helped prove HIV is the cause of AIDS.

Davis, a onetime leader of the Black Panther Party and the Communist Party USA who was prosecuted for her alleged involvement in a 1970 courthouse shoot-



In this May 12, 2018 file photo, actress Jane Fonda poses during a portrait session at the 71st international film festival, Cannes, in southern France.

Associated Press

out and ultimately acquitted, said her activism was not hers alone.

"At each significant turning point in my life, when I was introduced to the

world of progressive political activism, anti-racist prison abolition struggles, when I myself was on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List and ended up spending

two years in jail and on trial, when I became involved in many international solidarity efforts, intersectional feminist movements, I've always been one of many,"

Davis said in accepting her award. "My own consciousness has been enabled always by shared endeavors and collective consciousness."

The hall in Seneca Falls, where a landmark U.S. women's rights convention took place in 1848, doesn't identify a theme when it calls for nominations, said induction chairwoman Sujatha Ramanujan. But she said sometimes a theme emerges, as it has this year, that reflects the political and social mood of the country.

"It shows up in the nominations because we ask the general public," Ramanujan said, "and in a time when women are feeling like their voices need to be heard, they're nominating women whose voices were loud." She pointed particularly to Allred and her work as an advocate for women who have been abused and to Deer, a Native American activist focused on victims' rights. □

Solid gold toilet stolen from Winston Churchill's birthplace

By GREGORY KATZ
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A unique solid gold toilet that was part of an art exhibit was stolen early Saturday from the magnificent home in England where British wartime leader Winston Churchill was born.

The toilet, valued at roughly 1 million pounds (\$1.25 million), was the work of Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. It had been installed only two days earlier at Blenheim Palace, west of London, after previously being shown to appreciative audiences at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Police said the toilet was taken early Saturday by thieves who used at least two vehicles. Because it had been connected to the palace's plumbing system, police said the toilet's removal caused "significant damage and flooding" to the building, a UNESCO World Heritage site filled with valuable art and furniture.



This Sept. 16, 2016 file image made from a video shows the 18-karat toilet, titled "America," by Maurizio Cattelan in the restroom of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Associated Press

A 66-year-old man was arrested in the case, but he has not been identified or charged.

Inspector Richard Nicholls from Thames Valley Police said police believe the thieves left the spacious

property about 4:50 a.m. and that the toilet was the only item taken. Closed circuit TV footage is being studied in the investigation. Prior to the theft, visitors to the Cattelan exhibition could book a three-minute

appointment to use the toilet. This had proved popular when the toilet was on display at the Guggenheim. The artist intended the golden toilet to be a pointed satire about excessive wealth. Cattelan has previ-

ously said: "Whatever you eat, a \$200 lunch or a \$2 hot dog, the results are the same, toilet-wise."

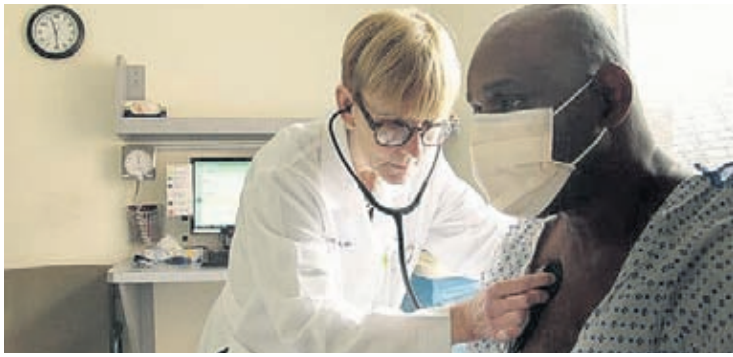
Last year, the chief curator at the Guggenheim offered to lend the golden toilet to U.S. President Donald Trump and his wife Melania Trump when they asked to borrow a Van Gogh painting for their private White House quarters. Curator Nancy Spector had been critical of Trump in social media.

Saturday's theft also comes after Edward Spencer-Churchill told The Times newspaper that the golden toilet would not be very easy to steal since it was connected to the palace's plumbing.

"So no, I don't plan to be guarding it," he said.

Thames Valley Police Detective Inspector Jess Milne said: "The artwork has not been recovered at this time but we are conducting a thorough investigation to find it and bring those responsible to justice." □

'Diagnosis' column that uses crowdsourcing leaps to Netflix



This photo provided by Netflix shows Dr. Lisa Sanders examining a patient in a scene from the new Netflix series "Diagnosis," which transports Sanders' column from the pages of The New York Times to television.

Associated Press

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IT
 JESSICA CHASTAIN | JAMES MCAVOY
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 SAT-SUN 1:50 | 5:20 | 8:50
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 PBP MON-FRI 5:05 | 8:30
 SAT-SUN 1:40 | 5:05 | 8:30

47 METERS DOWN UNCAGED
 SOPHIE NÉLISSE | CORINNE FOIX
 PH MON-THU 6:10 | 8:20
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 PBP MON-FRI 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:35
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ANGEL HAS FALLEN
 GERARD BUTLER | MORGAN FREEMAN
 PH MON-FRI 5:50 | 8:15
 SAT-SUN 2:45 | 5:30 | 8:15
 PBP MON-SUN 9:15

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 JACOB TREMBLAY | KEITH L. WILLIAMS
 WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
 PBP MON-THU 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:25
 FRI 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:25 | 11:30
 SAT 1:15 | 3:20 | 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:25 | 11:30
 SUN 1:15 | 3:20 | 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:25

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 JASON SUDEIKIS | JOSH GAD
 WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
 PBP MON-FRI 4:45 | 7:00
 SAT-SUN 2:30 | 4:45 | 7:00

DORA AND THE LOST CITY OF GOLD
 ISABELA MONER | EVA LONGORIA
 WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
 PBP MON-THU 4:10 | 6:30 | 8:50
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 SAT 1:50 | 4:10 | 6:30 | 8:50 | 11:10
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NEW YORK (AP) — There are some physicians who forbid their patients from going online to type in their symptoms, fearing they'll get incorrect information or become more anxious. Dr. Lisa Sanders is not among them.

Sanders, whose monthly "Diagnosis" column in The New York Times magazine inspired the hit Fox TV series "House," has a more practical — and democratic approach — to so-called Dr. Google.

"I actually think that no matter what doctors said or when they said it, patients have been discussing their illnesses as the first symptoms happen," she said.

"By the time a patient brings their story to me as their primary care doctor, they've already run it by their best friend, their spouse, their mom, their kids — they've told their story to everybody. It turns out that the internet is now just one more everybody you tell your story to. I don't think that's a bad thing."

Sanders doesn't just think crowdsourcing isn't bad, she's harnessing the inter-

net and social media in her work diagnosing unusual cases. This month, she's showing off that approach to a whole new crowd — Netflix users.

The new seven-part documentary series "Diagnosis" piggybacks on her Times columns by profiling seven patients as they track down a diagnosis, from a Gulf War veteran in New Mexico to a girl with seizures in New York City.

"The show is about diagnosis as a process that doctors go through but it's also a show about diagnosis as a process that patients go through, too. And I think both ends have to be treated with respect and honored," Sanders said.

In the series, Sanders consults as the patients and their doctors seek various treatments, go down blind alleys and seek advice on social media, from patients and doctors alike. More voices in the mix mean more dizzying options but some lead to unexpected solutions. The little girl in New York with seizures is told by one doctor that an operation to remove half

her brain as the "gold standard." But her parents decide to keep looking and instead choose to have a less invasive brain implant, an option they found out about through feedback.

"Never in human history has medicine been able to do and know as much as we do and know right now," said Sanders. "Never before have we been able to make as many diagnoses as we can now."

Jonathan Chinn, an executive producer alongside Scott Rudin and his cousin, Simon Chinn, said the series highlights the benefits of technology — in this case to connect a global village of experts. "We focus a lot on the negatives of technology — spying and a lack of privacy — but this is an example of a way that technology, if harnessed the right way and responsibly curated, can actually save lives and make peoples' lives tangibly better," he said. While there's a lot of misinformation online, Sanders thinks patients are becoming more critical about where they get their information. □

'Ghostbuster' sequel to focus on a family of original film



In this Feb. 24, 2008 file photo, Jason Reitman, left, an Oscar nominee for best director for his work on "Juno," arrives with his father, director Ivan Reitman for the 80th Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

BY RYAN PEARSON
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The upcoming "Ghostbuster" sequel will focus on the descendants of the original ghost-catchers who rushed around New York City in proton packs and jump-

suits. Ivan Reitman and Dan Aykroyd revealed details of the new film, saying it is expected out next year and will star Paul Rudd, Finn Wolfhard, Carrie Coon and McKenna Grace. Reitman directed the original 1984 film and Aykroyd co-wrote and co-starred in it. Reitman's son, Jason, is directing the new movie.

"I think it's a wonderful story because people seem to continue to be interested in 35 years after we came out with the first one. And I think we're trying to expand it a little bit. And I think Jason's movie does that," Ivan Reitman said Thursday. "This is a story about a family."

Both men were at Universal Studios Hollywood, where they were promoting a "Ghostbusters"-themed

"Halloween Horror Nights" maze attraction.

The franchise was last revived in 2016 with a group of four actresses — Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones — taking over as the title characters, a gender reversal from the original.

Aykroyd, who is a producer along with Reitman on the new "Ghostbusters," praised the 2016 film but said it was time to hand off the mantle "to a new generation."

"Although the girls' movie kept the concept and the ideas alive — and it was really good, they were great in it — it wasn't like giving it to the new generation, the actual descendants of the original Ghostbusters. So we're going to link to the DNA old and new there," he said. □

Rested and revived, The Black Keys return after 5-year break

By KRISTIN M. HALL

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) —

When the Black Keys last played a festival together in 2015, there was no grand plan to go on an indefinite hiatus. They just stopped booking shows and they went home to Nashville, Tennessee to sleep in their own beds.

Now four years after their performance at Outside Lands in San Francisco, Dan Auerbach and Patrick Carney are more than ready to hit the stage again with their first new record in five years, "Let's Rock" and a new tour starting Sept. 19 in Los Angeles.

Carney, for one, has noticed a difference since the band last toured. He recently woke up at 6 a.m. to change a diaper for his 1-year-old son that he shares with wife and fellow musician Michelle Branch and then dropped his stepdaughter off at school.

"That's a big change for me from five years ago," Carney said. "I would have been waking up at 11."

"Changing his own diaper," retorted Auerbach, himself a father of two.

While their latest music video for their single "Go," pretends that the reason for their hiatus was because they hated each other, Carney likened their relationship to being as close as brothers.

"I love the guy, but also at the same time, man, sometimes I want to wring his neck," Carney said.

Auerbach responded: "I've never had those feelings about Pat."

But jokes aside, the four-time Grammy winners behind hits like "Lonely Boy," "Howlin' For You," and "Tighten Up," needed to take a break from the road. Their touring schedule was taking a toll on their personal lives and it was up to them to put the brakes on it.

"No one who is working for us . or with us is going to say, 'Yeah, don't generate any income for five years,'" said Carney. "We had to realize we needed to take a break and that's OK."



In this Aug. 19, 2019, photo, Patrick Carney, left, and Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys pose for a portrait in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

Heavily inspired by blues rock and low-fi garage rock, Carney and Auerbach met in high school in Akron, Ohio, in the '90s, tinkering around with four-track recording systems at Carney's house.

In the break, they both continued to work on separate musical projects as both producers and collaborators. Auerbach, who won has won a Grammy for non-classical producer of the year, built up his label Easy Eye Sound with several emerging acts like Yola and highlighting un-

known blues players like Leo "Bud" Welch, as well as working on his own solo album and producing Cage The Elephant's Grammy-winning rock album "Tell Me I'm Pretty." Carney also worked as a producer on his wife's last album, as well as producing Nashville artists such as (asterisk)repeat and Turbo Fruits.

"It's been really good for us," said Auerbach. "We really had fun making the new record when we did get back together. And I think it was because we were able to do all that different

work during the time off."

And just as there was no plan to take a break, there was very little preparation for their return to the studio. They came into Auerbach's studio in Nashville with no songs or lyrics prepared and no producer.

"We just set a date and showed up here at Dan's studio and it was the first time we had recorded music together in five years," said Carney.

They brought in engineers, but no outside producer like they had with Brian Burton, also known as Dan-

ger Mouse, who worked on their previous records "El Camino" and "Brothers." Those albums catapulted them from clubs and theaters to playing arenas like Madison Square Garden and festivals worldwide. But they wanted the recording process for this record feel like they did at the beginning of their career.

"The fun always usually comes back to the two of us being in the studio," Carney said.

The album came out in June and the new tour with Modest Mouse as their opening band is much more manageable with just 33 dates in North America. They also added some extra guitar players on stage to replicate Auerbach's layered guitars on the recorded albums.

"Every single record we've ever made since the very beginning, I've always doubled up my guitars or tripled them up," said Auerbach. "And this is the first time I've ever really heard that onstage."

They are easing back into touring with their Wiltern show, the only theater gig on the arena tour, which tickets will be available first for fan club members. Even after the long break, Auerbach said he's not worried about whether fans will show up again. □

Erik Larson's next book centers on Nazi blitz of London

By HILLEL ITALIE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Erik Lar-

son's next book tells a story he knows has been heard before.

"The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz," which comes out next March, is set during the Nazi bombing of London in 1940-41. Countless books and movies have documented those fateful months and Winston Churchill's call to "stand up to" Hitler, so that time would be remembered as the British empire's "finest hour." But Larson said in a recent interview that he felt there were ways to drama-

tize those events that have yet to be fully "exploited." He is drawing upon everything from the diary of Mary Churchill, the prime minister's daughter, to intelligence reports and other materials only recently declassified.

"My goal was to put us there in that first year of his prime ministry," said Larson, known for the best-selling "The Devil in the White City," his novelistic portrait of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

During a recent telephone interview, Larson said he thought of doing the new book after moving from Seattle to New York in 2015 and for the first time viscer-

ally sensing the impact of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"Had I been living in the apartment I'm in now I would have seen the smoke," he said. "I started to think about how you cope during a time like that."

Larson will juxtapose the Nazi blitzkrieg with such parallel narratives as Churchill's urgent campaign for aid from the United States and Britain's efforts to camouflage Churchill's country home from the Nazi bombers.

"There was all kinds of stuff that I wondered at first if I should use," he said. "I finally just said, 'I'm into this. By god, I like it.'" □



This cover image released by Crown shows "The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During The Blitz," by Erik Larson.

Associated Press

In a forest on the trail of synchronous fireflies

By **TED ANTHONY**
Associated Press

KELLETTVILLE, Pa. (AP) — Picture a moonless June evening, shortly after midnight, deep in a northwestern Pennsylvania forest. Wild sounds echo gently. Stars glow far above through the canopy of trees. Otherwise it is dark — so very dark.

But wait. There — right there, to the left — a single tiny light flickers on. And then another. And another. In moments they are switching on and off in stunning synchronicity, as if, deep in the woods, you have come upon a magical summer-time Christmas tree. It's a show of light and nature, biology and dreaminess. It's everything the glowing screen in your pocket is not. This is what it's like to walk smack into a pack of synchronous fireflies — "lightning bugs," as many of us called them in childhood. But these possess the unique capability of flashing in glorious, almost otherworldly unison.

The display happens every year in North America as spring ebbs into summer. It sweeps north as temperatures warm, up from Tennessee's Smoky Mountains to, on this night, the thick woods of the 500,000-acre (200,000-hectare) Allegheny National Forest, 100 miles (160 kilometers) from Pittsburgh.

Of hundreds of types of fireflies, these are perhaps the most remarkable. What they do, in a world of mass-produced experiences, is organic and natural and



This June 14, 2019 photo Peggy Butler, organizer of the Pennsylvania Firefly Festival looking at some fireflies in a jar at the Tionesta Creek and Firefly Island, in Kellestville, Pa.

Associated Press

utterly unplugged.

People come from around the world for this. Peggy and Ken Butler organize an annual Pennsylvania Firefly Festival here, offering an intricate, quiet and fleeting experience where science and poetry live side by side. Visitors come to see the "Chinese lantern" fireflies that seem to float through the air by Tionesta Creek. But they come, most of all, for the synchronous fireflies, that put on their choreographed light show for two weeks in late June in the forest around the Butlers' Black Caddis Ranch.

"It's so hard to put into words," Peggy Butler says. "A lot of people tell us they're here for a bucket list item. They're trying to

find some missing piece of something."

THE EXPERIENCE

To walk on the edge of Tionesta Creek, cross over "firefly island" and wander into the forest to see the synchronous insects glowing and flitting above is to ponder a wonderful question: Where do the fireflies end and the stars begin?

The Butlers moved here from Ohio several years ago with no idea of the bounty in their backyard. Firefly researchers showed up and told them, essentially, "Prepare yourselves. You're going to get a lot of visitors."

They did. Last year, more than 500 people converged on their property for the festival. This year, campgrounds are booked for peak firefly season.

The phenomenon injects some economic energy into an area once dominated by sawmills, lumberyards and tanneries. But that traffic comes at a cost: "thousands of people traipsing through the forest, willy-nilly, looking for these things," as Butler puts it.

Because female fireflies stay close to the ground, as do firefly larva and immature insects, more foot traffic can mean more firefly casualties. And because

fireflies light up less when light pollution is present, visitors with flashlights and cellphones can interrupt mating and impact the next firefly generation.

And yet, the appreciation of natural phenomena in an age of videogames and synthetic distractions is worth something, too.

"I'm very actively trying to spend my life not staring at a screen," says Kiley Voss, 21, of Buffalo, New York, who's studying conservation biology and interning with the Butlers. "I want to spend my life outdoors and be places where there's no cell service. This is one of those places."

THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT

How do they do it? And

why?

The first question has an answer. As for the second, firefly experts only have theories.

Synchronous males can see each other light up, and they can reset their internal pacemakers in real time to sync with male counterparts flying nearby, according to researchers. Females wait below, in brush near the ground. The males light up to attract them, as with most firefly species.

But why? Why light up together, when that would seem to create competition for males trying to entice a female mate? Why create what Sara Lewis, who has researched fireflies for more than two decades, calls "silent synchronous symphonies"?

"It's still a mystery," says Lewis, a biology professor at Tufts University in Massachusetts. "Why some, and why not others? Why are they doing it? We still don't know."

There are theories. The first, known as "visual clutter," suggests that it's to male fireflies' advantage to cluster so they're broadcasting in sync with other males in their line of sight, thus attracting female attention. The second theory, the "silent window," focuses not on the synchronized lighting but in the pause for darkness between bursts. Perhaps, that theory goes, if they're all dark for 6 seconds or so, they can more easily see females flashing in the brush below. □



This June 13, 2019 shows versicolor, or "Chinese lanterns," fireflies that seem to float through the air along a path on the Tionesta Creek in Kellestville, Pa.

Associated Press



This June 13, 2019 photo shows a sign in the Allegheny National Forest that directs hikers to Peggy and Ken Butler's Black Caddis Ranch in Kellestville, Pa.

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